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- Contest-winning module
- A hard look at monks



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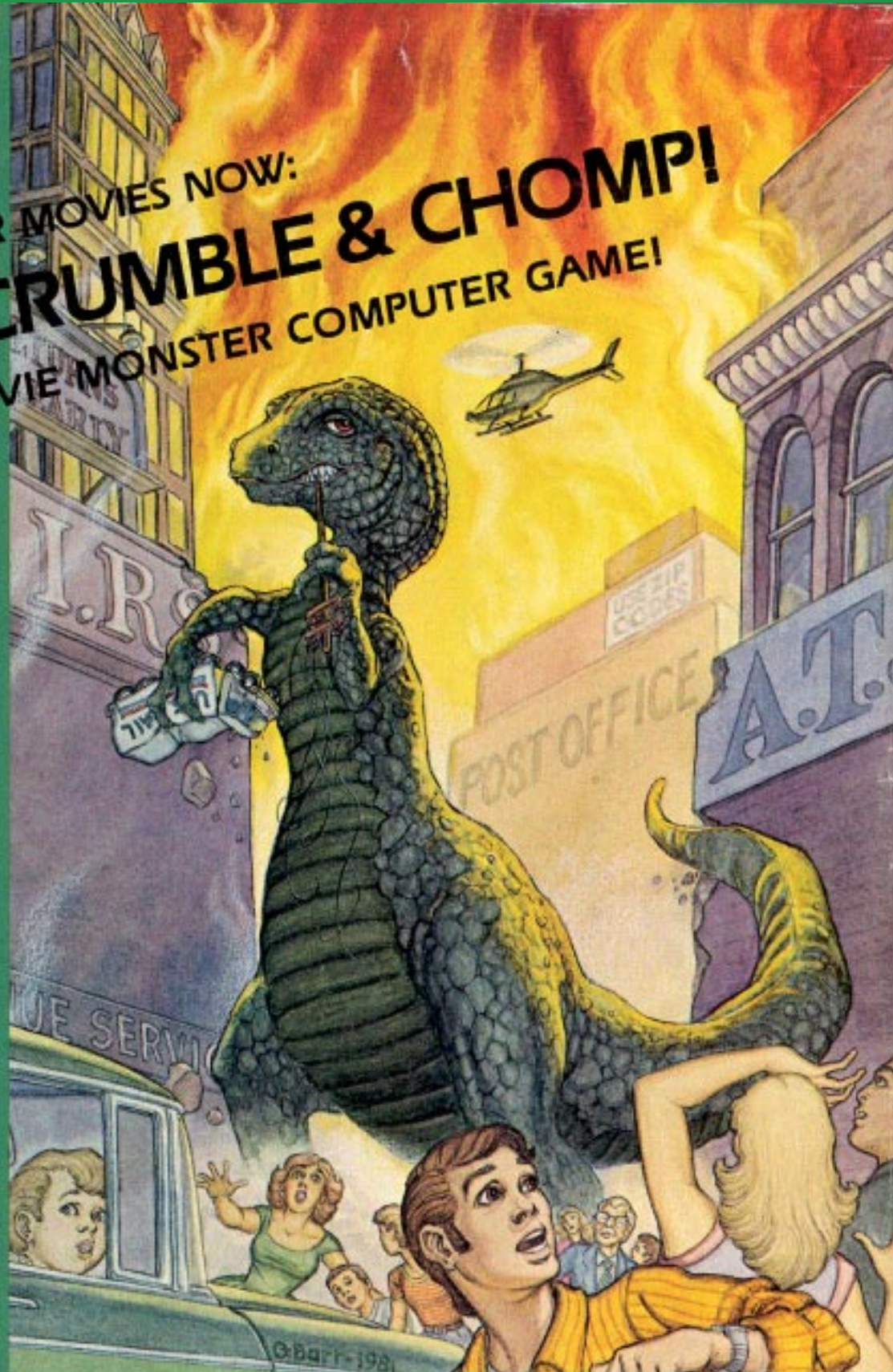
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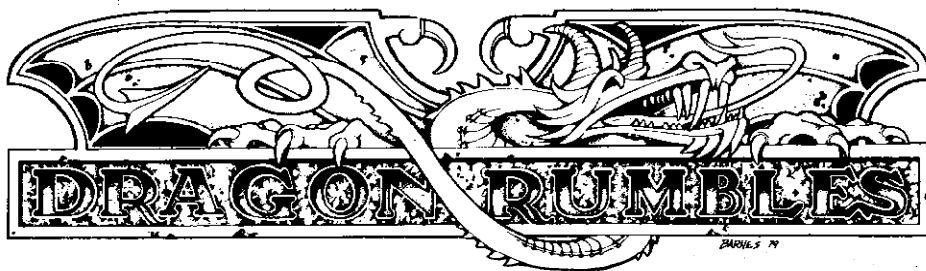
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There is a bit of a new trend in gaming that I find a bit disturbing, and perhaps it should be food for thought for all of us. I refer to the recent interest in so-called "live" games, especially of the "assassin" or "killer" varieties.

These types of games are billed as role-playing games, and in the strictest definition of the word, I guess they are. What disturbs me is that they are being equated by the non-gaming public (or by those with limited gaming experience) with heroic fantasy and science fiction role-playing games — and the types are not the same.

I'm not picking on Steve Jackson here, although he claims his recently released *KILLER* game is the first commercially available set of rules for the genre. My first exposure to "live" games was many years ago in college, and I've seen them played several times since then. "Live" games are also not necessarily of the assassin type either — I've known of a few *LOTR* interpretations, also.

Live games may be role-playing games, but they are not the same as what we have come to call adventure role-playing games (D&D® and AD&D™ games, *Traveller*, *RuneQuest*, etc.). Live games require physical action. In the assassin games, this involves stalking a person designated as a target (the stalker may be a target as well) and performing a "kill" with, for example, a squirt of a water pistol to represent a gun shot, or an Alka-Seltzer tablet to represent poison.

The attraction of this type of simulation escapes me. Steve says in his ads for *KILLER* that the game will "test your reflexes and ingenuity in a way no paper game ever will..." I'm sure it would, but why bother? If I want to test my reflexes against another person, I can think of many ways that do not involve even simulated weapons — or, if weapons are the point, we could meet at the local skeet and trap club. Ingenuity? Working on this magazine tests it about as fully as I care to have it tested. But, I digress...

What we have here is a type of game in which ingenuity and strategy are secondary to the performance of physical actions, and the only concessions to role-playing are an alias and performing feats of thespian skill like "dying in a very realistic or artistic fashion" (worth 5 points in *KILLER*). While this *is* role-playing, it is limited to the extent of a person's physical abilities and acting talent.

"Live" role-playing games are much more an exhibition (like a Wild West shoot-out on a movie lot or an SCA demonstration) than actual game playing. I'm for any activity that is fun for the participants and harmless to everyone else. But the "live" role-playing games, particularly the assassin type, may not be entirely harmless to everyone else. Physical games — spectator sports, for example — can cause harm to the participants. But the spectators of those sports are *willing* spectators, and they aren't on the playing field while the game is going on. "Live" games are often played in public. Sooner or later there will be an injury to a "spectator" (bystander), and if it happens to occur in the wrong place at the wrong time, the headline will read something like, "Student Injured in Role-playing Game at Local College." And all of us sitting at tables with paper-and-pencil role-playing games will be equated with those folks wearing masks and chasing each other around with water pistols and bean shooters.

Perhaps a more serious consideration, though, is how the non-gaming public is going to view these games even if no one gets hurt. Most of us, at one time or another, have been called upon to explain our reasons for playing paper-and-pencil adventure role-playing games, particularly the heroic fantasy type. Despite our best efforts to explain, there are still many who view such a pastime as some sort of escape from reality, or worse, just from seeing some people sitting around a table with books and dice! How are they going to look at people chasing each other and playing assassin?

I fail to see the attraction for "live" role-playing (and in some cases I think it is just an excuse for a good water balloon fight), but I'll grant that the type has its place in the overall list of games that may be played. But, like anything else in this world, perceptions (mine included) depend upon perspective. While I grant that there is a place for "live" role-playing, others will not. And it is a very small step from condemning "live" role-playing games to condemning *all* role-playing games.

Dragon^{T.M.}

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Publisher Jake Jaquet
Editor-in-Chief Kim Mohan
Editorial staff Bryce Knorr
 Marilyn Mays
 Gali Sanchez
Sales Debbie Chiusano
Circulation Corey Koebernick
Office staff Cherie Knoll
 Roger Raupp
Contributing editors . . . Roger Moore
 Ed Greenwood

This issue's contributing artists:

Clyde Caldwell	Bruce Whitefield
Roger Raupp	Will McLean
Susan Collins	Dexter Pratt
James Holloway	J. D. Webster
Harry Quinn	Phil Foglio

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The awesome task of digging (yes, sometimes literally) our way through scores of hefty manuscripts is over. The hours upon hours spent poring over page after page have finally produced results. It is with a great sigh of relief and a similarly large fanfare (*taaa—daaa!*) that we present *The Garden of Nefaron*, the winning entry of International Dungeon Design Contest II.

If you got the idea from the above paragraph that it was more than a bit of work going through all the entries, then I guess I got the point across. That point is made, not to make you feel sorry for us (after all, nobody *told* us to have the contest), but in apology for the fact that it took so long to come up with a winner.

As might have been expected, the overall quality of the entries took a distinct step up from the previous contest. What was *not* expected was the great increase in *quantity* — nearly 200 entries were received for the AD&D™ division of the contest, and every one of them had to be looked over before we could make even the most preliminary selections. Howard DeWied's entry ended up at the top, but there were dozens of other contestants who obviously put their heart and soul into what they submitted — and they deserve an equally large share of the credit for making this contest such a high-quality competition. Our congratulations go to all the prizewinners, whose names are listed for posterity on page 48. When's the next contest? Well . . . give us a little while to recover from eyestrain and we'll let you know.

This issue's classy cover, "Dragon Spell," is the first evidence of the talent of Clyde Caldwell which has appeared on these pages. Clyde is a paperback-book cover artist of no small renown (look for his distinctive signature the next time you're browsing the bookstore shelves), and is also represented with a piece in our 1982 DAYS OF THE DRAGON™ calendar.

The cornerstone of our feature article section this month represents somewhat of a departure from policy for DRAGON™ magazine. Never before has this publication printed material which, to put it bluntly, suggests that an entire major section of the AD&D rules be reconstructed. But when authors Philip Meyers and Steven Howard provided us with well thought-out manuscripts on how the monk character class ought to be refurbished and redesigned, we decided to give them their due. Once

again, we point out that articles in DRAGON magazine are nothing more than *suggested* ways to change or enhance your game, and there's nothing "official," in any sense of the word, connected with our presentation of these (or any other) pieces of writing.

The longest single article inside (except for the module, of course) is the latest in our continuing line of suggested new non-player characters for an AD&D campaign: Andrew Dewar's vision of the Oracle. For some NPCs of deity-level status, take a look at the Bogatyrs, a collection of legendary old Russian heroes (and the villains they fought) which serves as the first installment of "Larger: Than Life," a new feature devoted to descriptions of super-high-powered characters on a par with the personalities in the DEITIES & DEMIGODS™ Cyclopedica.

On a more philosophical note, we offer you "Some universal rules" from contributing editor Roger Moore on how to design a personalized universe that works the way a universe should. And in the same vein, the second installment of John Prados' series in *Simulation Corner* on making a working model of your very own game design.

Some of the niftiest monsters around are those which have been "translated" from fantasy literature into AD&D terms. Mark Nuiver went through John Wyndham's science-fiction classic *The Day of the Triffids* with a fine-toothed pencil to come up with the definitive AD&D Triffid. Plant a few of these in your next adventure and see what blossoms.

You can't usually find out what's on the other side of a doorway unless you go through it. Len Lakofka, in his latest essay from *Leomund's Tiny Hut*, spells out how getting through a door can be a whole lot tougher than simply twisting the latch. In similar fashion, Merle Rasmussen, the dean of TOP SECRET™ administrators, tries to make things more difficult for agents by listing what equipment each type of spy can and can't employ.

The newest additions to the Dragon's Bestiary area couple of lawful good guys, the Argas and Narra, plus the bizarre one-eyed Oculon. Grouped in the Dragon's Augury section are a trio of games about three widely diverse subjects — and diversity is also the key word in *The Electric Eye*, where computer columnist Mark Herro takes time to clean out his tidbit file.

And the list goes on (but not for much longer) with a *Traveller* variant giving more "oomph" to the Merchant class; some recommendations from game-design scholar Glenn Rahman on how to make *Junta* a more revolutionary activity.

As evidence of our usual flair for finishing with a grin, the last three pages of #53 contain a sampling of "Dragon Mirth" cartoons; the current trials and tribulations of Finieous Fingers & Friends; and a new "What's New?" by Phil Foglio. If your page 80 is all wet and wrinkled, blame Phil; he told us to do it. —KM

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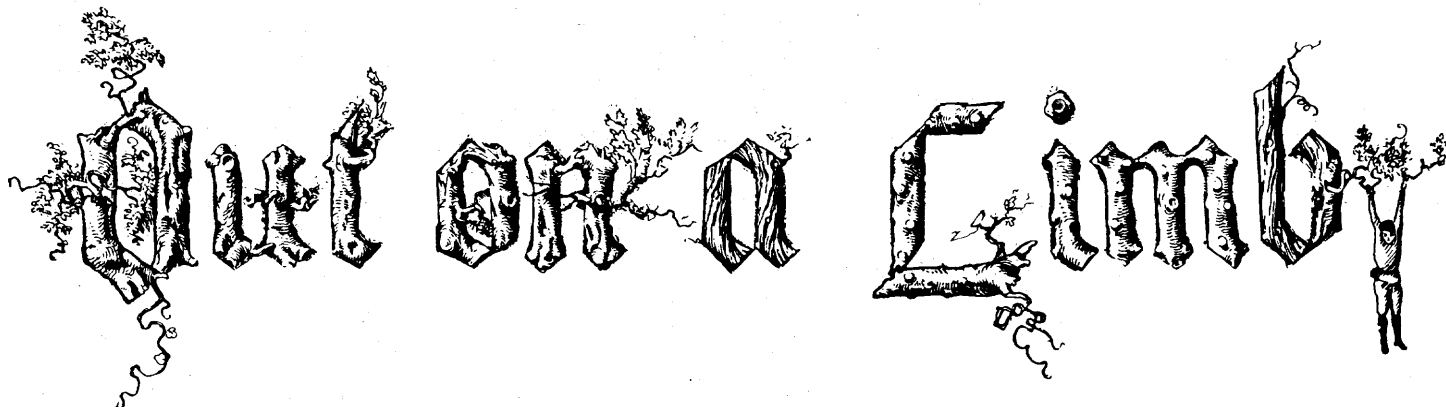
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More on reprints

Dear Editor:

I had been planning to write this letter for several months when I saw the "Reprint old issues" letter in DRAGON #50 and decided to respond. My problem is the same as David Perry's. If I could afford it, I would order every back issue there is. Personally, I would love to own every issue of DRAGON and I wouldn't mind if they were reasonably priced reprints.

I think there are two types of magazine back-issue collectors. The first is like me who wants them for what the articles have to offer, but still wants them in their original forms (unlike *The Best of The Dragon*) to keep them as sort of souvenirs. The other type is the person who's willing to pay outrageous prices for an original copy because they want not only the written material, but also want the magazines as collectables. They want the "real thing" like anybody who collects things like stamps and coins. I don't think the collectors of the originals would be offended by reprints, because they collect the originals for their authenticity.

As for the business standpoint, I don't see what's so hard about deciding which (and how many of each) back issues to reprint. All you have to do is include a questionnaire with the next issue of DRAGON asking which back issues the purchaser of the magazine would probably buy if they were available as reasonably priced reprints. You could also ask who would be interested in eventually collecting every back issue they don't own. This way you could decide how many of each back issue to reprint. Furthermore, you could lower postage costs by mailing all back issues second class along with the outgoing current issue.

I know that deciding how many of each issue to print would be a lot more complicated than this, but at least a questionnaire could provide a good guideline and give you some idea of your customers' desires. All of this would obviously take a lot of work on the part of the people at DRAGON, but you stand to gain completely satisfied customers and a handsome profit. Finally, I would like to say that if I didn't like DRAGON as much as I do, I wouldn't be interested in collecting back issues and wouldn't have written this letter. I agree with all your other subscribers: You publish the best role-playing magazine there ever was or ever will be.

Chris Doyle
Weston, Mass.

This letter from Chris is typical of several we have received lately, so perhaps the subject needs to be addressed again. As Kim said in response to David Perry's letter in #50, the

considerations of reprinting old issues of DRAGON magazines are partly ethical and partly business.

From an ethical standpoint, we will never reprint an exact duplicate of an out-of-print issue — that is, one that could not be discerned from the original. The collectors Chris mentions have already paid out large sums of money for old issues, and we'd be fleeing from a (justified) lynch mob if we tried such a thing.

While we're on the subject of collecting, I'd like to make it clear that while we at Dragon Publishing are very pleased that our readers think so much of the magazine that it has become a collectable item, we in no way endorse the prices of out-of-print magazines, any more than Ford sets the current price of a 1932 coupe. It's a seller's market, and we don't have any to sell you.

Now, on to the business considerations. While it is true that we could sell back issues if we had them, I'm afraid the price of reprinted copies would be more than you would want to pay for "mere" reprints. Without getting too technical, there are a myriad of factors to consider in publishing a magazine — rights to artwork, for example. We often purchase only one-time reproduction rights to artwork, especially cover pieces, and that means we only have the right to do one print run — no more.

Advertising is another factor. Our advertisers not only purchase space in the magazine, they purchase the space in a particular issue that will (generally) only be for sale for a certain length of time. As time goes by, prices change, availability of products varies, businesses move, and so forth. You can see what confusion an advertisement from 1978 appearing in a magazine offered for sale in 1981 could cause, and of course, there is no way we could charge an advertiser for publishing such a thing.

Also, there is the matter of quantity and what it costs us to make even a small number of anything. It costs basically the same amount of money to set up a press to run, whether you're going to print 50 copies of something or 50,000. If it costs \$10,000 to set up a press and you print 50,000, that means each magazine has to bring in at least 20 cents just to pay its "share" of that cost. Now consider the \$10,000 bill divided by, for instance, 500: If a print run were that small, each magazine would have to sell for \$20 just to pay the print bill alone.

And that's by no means the only cost associated with the production of a magazine. For one thing, the people who work here have to eat just like anybody else. For another thing, the cost of mailing a special issue to a customer is a lot higher than the "cheap" rate for

bulk second-class mailings. Also, the regulations of the U. S. Postal Service say that we can't use our second-class permit more than once a month, and all the items in any mailing have to be the same. People who bought reprints from us by mail order would have their choice of third class mail (not all that cheap, and it sometimes takes slightly less than forever to be delivered) or first class mail, where the rates are somehow linked to the price of gold.

I said I wasn't going to get too technical . . . well, it boils down to this: To reprint an issue would require just as much work and money as printing a new one, but it could not possibly generate the revenue that a new magazine does, and so it would have to have a much higher price than a current issue. I'm just guessing, but the price of a reprinted issue might have to be as high as \$10, assuming we had the time (which we don't) to put it together in the first place.

But, for the sake of argument, let's assume we could reprint an issue for the same price as the original. Although nominally the "same," it would in reality be different from the original — both by choice, so as not to water down the value of the original, and by necessity, to allow for new ads (or maybe no ads) and new artwork, and so forth. And when we sold all we printed, the price would start going up as people began collecting the scarce reprints. And then we'd start to get letters asking us to reprint the reprints.... — JJ

'High-handed'

Dear Editor:

I've been a DM for three years, and a faithful reader of your magazine for two. However, in recent issues I have noticed something that disturbs me. Why do you persist in publishing only new NPC's? Why not let your readers have some new player characters instead?

Several of the NPC's you have published, notably the Anti-Paladin, the Witch, and the Samurai, seem as if they were prevented from becoming PC's. All the information needed to run them as PC's is there: the experience levels, the hit dice, the special abilities, etc. If they were never intended to be played as PC's, why do you publish the experience points necessary to attain levels?

In DRAGON #49 in the Samurai article, it says, "In accordance with this magazine's policy the Samurai is presented as a non-player character." You go on to say that if certain NPC's were used as PC's it could unbalance games, and even whole campaigns; agreed. But why not publish some player characters

that attempt to keep campaigns in balance? Your readers could use them as NPC's if they so desire.

Who do you think you are? You have no right to dictate how we DM's run our campaigns. Don't you think we are capable of keeping a campaign in balance without being prevented from using new PC's? You seem to think you have a monopoly on good ideas. One gets the feeling that the D&D game system is so fragile that it instantly becomes unbalanced when someone adds their own ideas, DM's who unbalance their campaigns by making foolish additions deserve what they get.

I cannot stop you from publishing whatever you want. But I know I would be much more interested in a new player character for my group to use than a NPC that I will probably never put into action. Stop trying to protect us. Let the customers choose, and stop being so high-handed!

Adam Rosenblatt
New York, N.Y.

Perhaps this letter should have been answered by Kim, who is in charge of high-handedness around here (see *Out on a Limb*, #45). Who do we think we are? We are the staff of *DRAGON* magazine, a monthly adventure role-playing aid—no more, no less. Certainly we have never claimed nor assumed the right to dictate how individual DM's run their campaigns. Even if we had the right (which, I repeat, we don't), we would have no way to enforce our will on our readers. So back off, Jack, and listen up as I quote from the preface to the *Dungeon Masters Guide*:

"As the creator and ultimate authority in

your respective game, this work is written as one Dungeon Master equal to another. Pronouncements there may be, but they are not from 'on high' " (Recognize that phrase, Adam?) "as respects your game.... it must have some degree of uniformity, a familiarity of method and procedure from campaign to campaign within the whole. ADVANCED D&D ... is above all a set of boundaries for all of the 'worlds' devised by referees everywhere...., what is aimed at is a 'universe' into which similar campaigns and parallel worlds can be placed. With certain uniformity of systems and 'laws,' players will be able to move from one campaign to another and know at least the elemental principles which govern the new milieu, for all milieus will have certain (but not necessarily the same) laws in common.... This uniformity will help not only players, it will enable DMs to carry on a meaningful dialogue and exchange of useful information. It might also eventually lead to grand tournaments wherein persons from any part of the U.S., or the world for that matter, can compete for accolades.... Variations and difference are desirable, but should be kept within the boundaries of the overall system." (Is this sinking in, Adam?) "...creative addition can most certainly be included... Keep such individuality in perspective by developing a unique and detailed world based on the rules of ADVANCED D&D. No two campaigns will ever be the same, but all will have the common ground necessary to maintaining the whole as a viable entity about which you and your players can communicate with the many thousands of others who also find swords and sorcery role-playing gaming as an amusing and enjoyable pastime."

DRAGON magazine has, over the past five years, presented hundreds of variants, additions, and suggestions for or about the D&D and AD&D games. Certainly, we have never been so high-handed as to say that they must all be used, and then only in the manner presented — indeed, many of the things we've published would contradict each other if they were used together. What we have done is to provide a forum for presentation of aspects of play that may be incorporated into play if desired, and further, presented these aspects in a manner that, we hope, agrees with the philosophy outlined in the preface to the DMG.

For example, an anti-paladin could be incorporated into a game as an NPC with whom the player characters interact. Those same player characters could move into another DM's world, where the "big nasty" of the moment is a lich or an evil high priest. The players could operate in this world just as easily even if the second DM had never heard of an anti-paladin.

If, on the other hand, the players all have characters who are anti-paladins, witches and samurai warriors, and the second DM doesn't happen to read the magazine, everything grinds to a halt faster than it takes to describe it. It's like if you and a friend play chess and, between yourselves, decide to allow pawns to move backward. That will work fine as long as you only play each other, but if you take on a new opponent who doesn't know your rules, you're in for problems.

If you want to allow NPCs that appear in *DRAGON* magazine to be used as player characters, go right ahead. We estimate that we have a readership of 200,000 people, but
(Turn to page 77)



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Why isn't this monk smiling?



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He's got a lot to kick about!

by Philip Meyers

Of all the character classes in the AD&D™ game, the class of monks is the most difficult to qualify for. A monk must have exceptional strength, wisdom, and dexterity, and — if he or she wishes to survive for very long — constitution.

The odds of rolling up such a character, even using the various "cheating methods" listed in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, are not favorable. Given this, one would expect a monk to be a powerful character indeed. At first glance this would appear to be true. The Grand Master of Flowers can reasonably claim to be the most powerful fighter around, able to inflict 128 points of damage in a single round. This superiority, however, is more theoretical than real. In actual practice, the monk is the weakest of the character classes, not the strongest.

The sources of a monk's weakness are many. First, monks are severely handicapped in armor class. The Novice starts at AC 10, is denied the use of any armor, and receives no armor class adjustment for dexterity. This situation fails to improve for a long time — at 5th level the hapless monk is a mighty AC 7.

As for hit points, the average 1st-level monk with a 16 constitution has 9 hit points. The extra hit die at 1st level is not enough to allow the monk to keep up with clerics, fighters, or even thieves, for very long. At 5th level the monk with a 16 constitution has an average 25 hit points, where the cleric has 32½, the fighter 37½, and the thief 27½. (No one should play a monk with a constitution of less than 16; the figures will humiliate the monk.)

The multiple attacks with open hands that are supposed to be the monk's forte are still negligible at 5th level, becoming appreciable only at 6th level, where the monk receives 3 attacks every 2 rounds. Fighters are, however, quick to catch up; at 7th level they also acquire this ability.

The spell-like powers of monks are laughable when compared to the spell abilities of clerics or magic-users. Just as the 6th-level magic-user is acquiring a second *Fireball* with which to destroy the enemy, the 6th-level monk is learning to feign death.

The ability to stun or kill an opponent is next to worthless at low and middle levels because the monk's chance of doing it is so small, and because the monk's awful armor class and hit points prevent the character from spending too much time in melee. Also, monks advance more slowly in level than any other character class at middle and upper levels.

Practical experience with monk characters reinforces the conclusion. In this author's experience, there seem to be two ways for a monk character to survive to reach upper levels. The first is for the monk to acquire a powerful magic item that offsets one or more of the monk's weaknesses, like a *Ring of Regeneration*, *Bracers of Defense AC 2*, or a *Cloak of Displacement*. The other way is for the monk to cower at the back of the party, avoiding combat wherever possible. This means the monk is generally useless and, aside from opening a few locked doors now and then, does nothing besides siphon off experience points from more deserving characters. Neither of these situations is wholly satisfactory.

Of course, one can always argue that, once the monk finally does make it to the upper levels, the long wait was worth it. An 8th-level monk is just about competitive with 8th-level characters in the other classes, and is clearly superior to an 8th-level thief, or even a 9th-level thief.

However, it is by no means certain that the monk character will ever get to 8th level, even should he or she honestly earn the 200,001 experience points required. This is due to the requirement that a monk of this level or higher must fight and defeat the present title holder in order to advance in level. Thus, every time the player-character monk attempts to advance in level beyond the 7th, the character must run a basic 50% chance of losing and failing to achieve the level.

Worse still, the price of defeat is a full

level's worth of experience points, just as if the monk had been energy-drained. A wealthy fighter who has been struck by a wight can pay a large sum for a *Restoration* spell. The defeated monk has no such option. In effect, this limits the monk to 7th level, or at best means that the monk will ultimately need 2 or 3 times as many experience points as listed, since the luck of the die will invariably cause the monk to be defeated a number of times. Worst of all, the monk may have to stand off challenges by NPC monks, and who can say how many Superior Masters will be out looking for the character who finally makes it to Master of Dragons?

In essence, then, the monk is a useless character at lower and middle levels, and is extremely difficult to maintain at upper levels. The player with visions of Bruce Lee or David Carradine dancing in his or her head is in for a big letdown when such a player tries to run a monk character.

The idea of a character class of martial artists is undeniably a good one, and monks deserve a place in the AD&D system. But how, then, can monks be made competitive and (if possible) more interesting?

It is possible to cure the defects in the present system without changing the nature of monks at all, as the following suggested system demonstrates.

First, in place of Tables I and II on page 31 of the *Players Handbook*, use the revised tables given herein.

MONKS TABLE I: EXPERIENCE POINTS AND LEVELS

Experience Points	Level	6-sided dice for accumulated hit points	Level Title
0—1,500	1	2	Novice
1,501—3,000	2	3	Initiate of the Rudiments
3,001—6,000	3	4	initiate of the Elements
6,001—12,000	4	5	Initiate of the Principles
12,001—25,000	5	6	Brother
25,001—40,000	6	7	Disciple
40,001—70,000	7	8	Disciple of Secrets
70,001—110,000	8	9	Disciple of Mysteries
110,001—160,000	9	10	Immaculate
160,001—220,000	10	11	Master
220,001—400,000	11	12	Superior Master
400,001—650,000	12	13	Master of Dragons
650,001—900,000	13	14	Master of the North Wind
900,001—1,150,000	14	15	Master of the West Wind
1,150,001—1,400,000	15	16	Master of the South Wind
1,400,001—1,650,000	16	17	Master of the East Wind
1,650,001—1,900,000	17	18	Master of Winter
1,900,001—2,200,000	18	19	Master of Autumn
2,200,001—2,500,000	19	20	Master of Summer
2,500,001—2,800,000	20	21	Master of Spring
2,800,001+	21	22	Grand Master of Flowers

MONKS TABLE II: MONKS ABILITY TABLE

Level	Effective Armor Class	Move	Open hand attacks/round	Open hand damage	Special abilities
1	6	15"	1	1-4	A
2	5	15"	1	1-6	B
3	4	16"	1	2-7	C
4	3	16"	3/2	2-7	D
5	3	17"	3/2	2-8	E
6	2	17"	3/2	3-9	F
7	2	18"	2	3-9	G
8	1	18"	2	2-12	H
9	1	19"	2	3-12	I
10	0	20"	5/2	3-12	J
11	0	20"	5/2	4-13	K
12	-1	21"	5/2	4-16	L
13	-1	22"	3	4-16	M
14	-2	23"	3	5-17	N
15	-2	24"	3	5-20	O
16	-3	25"	3	4-24	P
17	-3	26"	4	4-24	Q
18	-4	27"	4	6-24	R
19	-4	28"	4	5-30	S
20	-5	29"	4	8-32	T
21	-5	30"	4	6-36	U

Special abilities

A: The ability to feign death, as the present monk ability D:

B: The mind-masking ability (resistance to ESP), as present monk ability B.

C: The *Speak with Animals* ability, present monk ability A.

D: The self-healing ability (present monk ability E); plus immunity to disease (present ability C), also including immunity to *Haste* and *Slow* spells.

E: *Body Equilibrium*, as the psionic ability, except that it can be used but once per day, for 1 round per level of the monk. Also, the monk acquires *Mind Over Body*, usable for up to 1 day per level of the monk.

F: *Empathy*, as the psionic ability, but usable only once a day.

G: *Invisibility*, as the psionic power, but usable once a day for 1 turn per level the monk has achieved beyond the 6th.

H: *Molecular Manipulation*, as the psionic power, usable against inanimate objects only, once a day. Monks are limited to the 8th level of mastery in this power.

I: Resistance to charms, hypnosis, etc. as present monk ability G, plus 18 intelligence for purposes of *Telepathic* and *Mind Blast* attacks, as present ability H.

J: Retarded aging, as though the monk were using a *Phylactery of Long Years*, plus immunity to poison (present ability I), and immunity to *Geas* and *Quest* (present ability J).

K: *Body Control*, as the psionic ability, once a day for a maximum of 1 turn per level of the monk beyond the 10th.

L: The "Quivering Palm," present ability K.

M: *Dimension Door*, once a day, as the magic-user spell.

N: *Speak with Plants*, as a druid, present ability F.

O: *Mind Bar*, as the psionic ability,

100% chance of success, usable once a week, maximum duration 1 hour per level of the monk.

P: *Object Reading*, as the psionic ability, once a day.

Q: *Dimension Walk*, as the psionic ability, 1 hour per 2 levels the monk has achieved, usable once a day.

R: *Astral Projection*, once a week, as the cleric spell, but only the monk may so travel.

S: A premonition of death or serious harm occurs to the monk 1-4 turns before the harmful event, 90% of the time.

T: The monk acquires the ability to generate a *Tower of Iron Will* or an *Intellect Fortress* about himself or herself, duration 1 round per level of the monk, usable once a day. The monk must concentrate to use this power, and cannot do anything else besides walking slowly. If the monk's concentration is broken, the defenses disappear.

U: *Planeshift*, as the cleric spell, twice a day.

Note on quasi-psionic monk abilities

The powers in the above list that refer to the psionics section of the *Players Handbook* should be played as though the monk were psionic with regard to computing level of mastery, range, etc. Instead of expending psionic strength points to use the abilities, the monk simply abides by the use restrictions given above. If the monk character is actually psionic, attack/defense totals and modes may be used normally, but the psionic monk never receives disciplines other than those inherent in the class's special abilities.

Other suggested changes

1: Open hand damage done is halved, rounding up, when the monk is attacking a creature 10 feet or more in height, or

otherwise very large, and against creatures with a *natural* armor class of 0 or better.

2: A monk's thieving abilities are limited to Moving Silently, Finding (but not removing) Traps, Hiding in Shadows, Hearing Noises, and Climbing Walls.

3: Single combat as a means of advancement is not required until the monk reaches 12th level, and then only if the title is occupied (see below). A monk who loses a challenge loses 100,000 experience points and cannot challenge again for 1 year.

4: At 10th level a monk's hands and feet become the equivalent of +1 weapons for purposes of determining what creatures they can do damage to. At 18th level they become the equivalent of +2 weapons. (Moral: You can't karate-chop an iron golem.)

Upper-level advancement options

Monks can be either lawful good, lawful neutral, or lawful evil. The *Players Handbook* makes no mention of separate monastic orders for these alignment types; it follows that all monks are part of one big brotherhood, whether they be good or evil. In many respects, this does not make a great deal of sense. For instance (and this is a relatively minor point), the title names for monks sound like they were designed for lawful good, or lawful neutral, monks only. An evil Grand Master of Flowers? Hmmmm.

Either we must do away with evil monks, which would be a loss, or the system can be altered to more appropriately account for them.

One solution to this problem is to allow the existence of separate, parallel monastic orders, at least three of them and perhaps more. There could then be more than one of each of the upper-level monks, but only one per title per order. Each order would then decide how to solve the advancement problem. Lawful neutral orders might opt for the present system, as modified by "3" above.

Lawful evil orders might insist that combat be to the death, thus solving the problem of rematches constantly plaguing upper-level figures.

Lawful good orders might forbid advancement by combat, requiring candidates to wait until vacancies occur. When, for instance, the reigning Master of Winter dies, all lower masters could advance upon obtaining sufficient experience points. A panel of masters would decide whom to promote from among the three Masters of Dragons and the current Superior Masters.

Advancement by default should indeed occur on a fairly regular basis in any sort of monastic order, if only because the reigning Grand Master of Flowers is probably close to death (being old), divine ascension (being powerful), or both. These odds are suggested for such events:



Level Title	Chance of vacancy (per Year)	
12 Master of Dragons	3%	
13 Master of the North Wind	1%	
14 Master of the West Wind	1%	
15 Master of the South Wind	1%	
16 Master of the East Wind	1%	
17 Master of Winter	2%	
18 Master of Autumn	2%	
19 Master of Summer	4%	
20 Master of Spring	6%	
21 Grand Master of Flowers	10%	

Naturally, figures like these will vary from campaign to campaign. Numbers are given here only as an example of how such a system should be set up. Note that the chance given for each master level should be rolled for once per year, 10 total rolls to be made. These chances do not take into account possible deaths resulting from challenge combats. The DM will have to establish how often each master will be challenged. The Masters of Dragons could each be challenged as often as 2-8 times per year in a lawful neutral order as described above. There

would be relatively fewer challenges in a lawful evil order.

In a lawful good order not advocating advancement by combat, a DM might contrive to say the Grand Master of Flowers always rules for 1 year only, and at the end of that time becomes a divine being on one of the outer planes — insuring a steady stream of vacancies.

A lawful good monk would never lose experience points under this system. Such a monk would either have his or her total "frozen" at some point (say, 1 point short of the level occupied by another), or the DM could allow the monk's total to continue to increase but deny the monk the actual attainment of the new level until a vacancy occurred. The monk could then save up experience in advance, but would be limited in this endeavor to a total 1 point short of two levels beyond the monk's current level.

No matter how it is managed, there must be some form of restriction on monk advancement beyond the 11th level. Unrestricted advancement in a campaign where experience points are easy

to come by would mean the monk character would become extremely powerful too quickly and too easily. Also, monkish combat has become a traditional many players may be loath to give up.

Rationale for rule changes

Certain salient points of this alternative system need more explanation. It is suggested that monks receive six-sided dice for their hit dice instead of four-sided dice. This is to cure the monk's hit-point disadvantage.

Armor class, attacks per round, and damage per attack have been for low and middle-level monks.

The new intermediate experience levels allow the monk to rise as high as 11th level before advancement by combat becomes necessary. This is an important change, for it allows the monk who has been unsuccessful in challenging his or her superiors to go on an upper-level adventure. Also, it makes the rank of Master a good deal more formidable, and puts it on a par with the "name" ranks of other classes, such as Master Thief, Lord, or Wizard.

The new special abilities and powers presume that the inner strength of monks flows from the mind — that it is a sort of psionic power. After all, no degree of skill or knowledge will let a human being fall an unlimited distance when within 8' of a wall and take no damage when hitting bottom at terminal velocity.

Also, damage from open hand attacks of upper-level monks is hard to explain on the basis of physical skill alone. Can you imagine Bruce Lee killing a purple worm in a melee round with four mighty karate chops? Present rules let high-level masters do just that. The half-damage rule proposed above is designed to partially cure this situation; even so, some form of magical mind-power is the only way to account for the things monks can do. Moreover, the present monk powers closely resemble the related psionic disciplines. The new powers given above simply extend this principle, and are designed to make the monk a reasonably powerful and versatile character even at low and middle levels.

The thieving abilities of Removing Traps and Opening Locks were deleted because it is not clear how or why monks should have such abilities. For what purpose does a monastic aesthetic learn to pick locks? Surely not all monks are adventurers; why then do these monks learn skills usable nowhere else but on an adventure?

In game terms, it is no longer necessary to make the monk act as a second-rate thief so that the monk will have something to do on an adventure. The monk as redefined in this article is a first-rate warrior and scout (if an *Infravision* spell is used), and no longer needs such additional abilities.

Defining and realigning the monk

by Steven D. Howard

Probably the most common reaction I've heard among AD&D™ players to the monk class is, "Oh, yeah, monks . . . They're kind of a cross between clerics and thieves, right?" Ranking second in frequency is, "Play a monk? No, thanks. I'd like to live to see second level. Besides, I want to keep my treasure." And perhaps the third most common reaction is "Hey, this character could be a monk! That's great! I've always wanted to act out one of those Bruce Lee movies!"

Examining these reactions in order, monks are not cleric/thieves. True, they fight on the same table as clerics and save as thieves, and have some thieving abilities, but there's more to the monk class than that. Other than the sharing of an attack matrix, there is little in common between clerics and monks. The association no doubt springs from the "traditional" image of monks as those portly, bald-headed men who live at that big church up on the hill, where the chimes ring every quarter hour.

In an AD&D campaign, monks are not like that at all. Although the Players Handbook calls monks "monastic aesthetics," the book also describes them in terms which make them potentially the most efficient fighting machines in the AD&D universe. Their various immunities and their special advantage on saving throws give them very good defensive capabilities as well.

Secondly, monks *can* make it past first level and still do some actual adventuring in the meantime, though sometimes accomplishing this feat requires extraordinary circumstances. When my monk character Dmitri was a Novice, he was a member of a party hired by a High Priest to trash a nearby dungeon. (In case you're wondering, this dungeon posed a major threat to his temple, but he couldn't take care of it himself, because his sect had a holiday coming up.) The priest promised to heal any injuries suffered and to perform a *Raise Dead* upon any fatalities.

To make a long story short, guess who took six hit points (all he had) of damage from an orc's spear? After being raised, Dmitri was given a 1,000-point bonus award of experience points (see *Dungeon Masters Guide*, pages 85-86). This put him over the hump to second level, and the treasure he had left over just paid his training fees.

True, monks will give away most of their treasure, keeping only a few magic items, and some gold for buying food. But just think what this philanthropic reputation will do to the monk's social

standing. Instant popularity! This will serve the monk well, should he ever fall on hard times. ("Sure, Dmitri, you can stay at the castle for a few days until you raise enough to get the monastery out of hock. Heck, I'll give you a couple thousand gold pieces myself.")

Thirdly, monks are not kung fu maniacs, rushing about hacking at boards and bricks, screaming at the top of their lungs, and creating general havoc. (Nobody is, outside of Hollywood.) Hey, people, remember: Monks have to be lawful. Lawful means disciplined and self-controlled. Bruce Lee and leapers of that ilk are definitely chaotic. The character played by David Carradine in the TV series "Kung Fu" is, at best, neutral with respect to law and chaos: not a lawbreaker, but also not a person whose actions are always logical, predictable and dependable.

Monks are skilled in the martial arts, but they use their deadly powers (the "quivering palm" or an obvious attempt to kill) only as a last resort. Only when they see that there is no other way to solve a problem will they attack, and then not wantonly or recklessly, but carefully and methodically. If a monk ever kills a like-aligned creature, he should stop at nothing in an attempt to rectify the situation. Examples of what might be done include: persuading a cleric to *Resurrect* an opponent; getting a spell caster to use the power of a *Wish* or a magic item to change the outcome of the combat (but never so that the monk's party is harmed); or donating all of the monk's share of treasure to the family of the deceased. The dreaded "quivering palm" is truly a last resort, only to be used against those of diametrically opposed alignment (or perhaps by a lawful good monk attacked by an upwardly mobile lawful evil monk, or vice versa) or those who present such an awful threat that there is no other available means of dealing with it.

Now, to tackle a few of the more frequently asked questions about monks. (Perhaps I should send these to Sage Advice, and see if they agree with me.)

(Editor's note: We showed Steven's questions and answers to the kindly old sage. All he did was mutter something about "whippersnappers" trying to do his job, and then he threw his quill across the room...)

Q. Why can't monks use flaming oil?

A. That's a good question. I wish the rules had provided a good answer. Maybe setting folks on fire is a chaotic thing to do.

Q. Then how come paladins and other lawful characters can do it?

A. Okay, maybe the founder of monkdom ("monkhood" would have been an obvious pun) didn't think to teach "Flaming Oil 101" at his monastery. If this sounds feeble to you, that makes two of us.

Q. How can we get around the problem of using flaming oil in a party that contains a monk?

A. Obviously, you can't. That would be like party members asking a paladin to turn his back while they poison the dragon. (This answer applies if you accept the first explanation of the oil question. If you accept the second explanation, there's no problem. Just don't let the monk do the torching.)

Q. What the heck are bo sticks and jo sticks?

A. Judging from the illustrations in the *Dungeon Masters Adventure Log*, a bo stick is a 5-foot-long wooden stick, tapered at each end, and a jo stick is a 3-foot-long wooden stick, tapered at each end, but with one end slightly thicker than the other. According to the *Players Handbook*, a bo stick is 5 feet long, weighs 15 gp, and does 1-6, 1-3 damage; a jo stick is 3 feet long, weighs 40 gp, and does 1-6, 1-4 points of damage. Evidently, both are used to knock people upside the head.

Q. Is there any way to get around the problem of having only one monk per level above the eighth?

A. Is it reasonable to assume that in a milieu such as the ones most of us play in, which postulate the existence of thousands of characters, that there are only nine monks, higher than 8th level? (Don't write in, that was a rhetorical question.)

Consider the situation in this manner: There are, say, 100 characters per year in a campaign who begin as first-level monks. Assuming a five percent annual attrition rate, and an advancement rate of one level per year, there will be at least 675 monks of seventh level or lower in a fully developed campaign using those figures. There are only 9 "chiefs" (Master-level monks) to keep track of all those "Indians." Each high-level monk would have a minimum (average) of 75 lower-level monks to watch over (and watch out for). This surveillance and supervision would take up probably all of the Master's time, leaving him no time for adventuring. This is a shame, because high-level monks are just coming into their own as adventurers when they have to stop and keep track of a bunch of green kids. And suppose there is a two percent annual recruiting rate? But enough of this; you know the problem. I'm supposed to supply an answer. (Note that I said "an," not "the.")

What if those 675 low-level monks were divided by alignment into 3 separate monk organizations, each independent of the others? Using the formula given in the Players Handbook for determining non-player character monk alignments, this gives the nine lawful good monk leaders 338 lower-level monks, or 37 each; the lawful neutrals 236, or 26 each; and the lawful evils 101, or 11 each.

If these figures still seem too unmanageable, it is a small step further to postulate the existence of smaller factions. Let's further assume that due to strife, disagreement of religion, and great distance (my campaign map covers an area roughly the size of the United States)

these alignment groups have further split into smaller factions, called "brotherhoods." With a little more juggling of the numbers (perhaps a higher dropout rate or a higher recruitment rate), a structure can be established where each high-level monk has only around eight lower-level monks to "keep watch over," allowing much more time for adventuring.

One problem that could arise within a single brotherhood is the "too many chiefs and not enough Indians" syndrome. Should this occur, a large-scale recruiting drive would be initiated in the area. Should the problem grow severe, the brotherhood might have to disband. The few remaining members would have

the options of retirement, changing classes, or beginning to study in another brotherhood (this last act could require a drop in level and a re-training period of several months.).

Naturally, it is not possible to allow for more than one Grand Master of Flowers and still entirely uphold the spirit of the AD&D rules. But it is possible, and may be advisable, to alter the monkish hierarchy to suit a particular campaign, as long as the system and the rationale devised to affect such a change is logical, balanced and fair. What is given above represents a solution to the "problem"—but by no means the only one or the best one.



INTRODUCTION

SAGE ADVICE offers answers to questions about the D&D® and AD&D™ rules and how those rules can be interpreted. The answers provided in this column are not official rulings, and should not be considered as such by people who make use of the answers to solve a problem in their game-playing.

Because of the great amount of questions received for *SAGE ADVICE*, the sage cannot guarantee to send out individual answers to questioners, even if a return envelope is enclosed. Questions and answers will be published in *DRAGON* magazine as frequently and as promptly as space permits. Preference is usually given to questions of a general nature instead of questions which pertain to something that happened in a particular group's adventure, unless the latter type of question can be answered in a generally useful way. Questions should be sent to Sage Advice, c/o *DRAGON* magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

* * *

My character is a lawful neutral monk in a party with two neutral evil characters and two neutral goods. The DM says that if our party runs into a party of lawful neutral monks and fighting breaks out, my monk would join the other monks in fighting, against my party. I think the DM is full of it. What do you think?

There is a lawful evil high-level NPC monk in our campaign. What will happen when my lawful good player-character monk gains enough experience to challenge this monk for position? There seem to be many ways in which an evil character could avoid such a challenger. How can such an opponent be made to "fight fair"?

The key to properly determining a monk's course of action in each of these examples has to do with understanding the concept-

of lawfulness. Monks must always be lawful, and for very good reason, because a monkish hierarchy and advancement within that hierarchy would be valueless if so much as a single non-lawful element was allowed to "contaminate" it.

The purpose and goal of lawfulness, from the definition of lawful neutral in the Players Handbook, is "bringing all to predictability and regulation." Lawful characters must always be predictable in their actions and motives. The Dungeon Masters Guide adds that it is vital for all lawful neutral characters to have "regimentation and strict definition" in their lives and their outlook on life.

How is this applied to the first situation? Simply this: A monk's lawfulness will cause him to always honor the prior commitment he made to the members of the party he's with. His allegiance is to his comrades first, because that's the lawful thing to do. Of course, if the party members treat the monk in a less than lawful fashion themselves, they must be willing to suffer the consequences of that action if the monk elects to "desert." No lawful character will remain allied to a party which treats him unfairly, regardless of previous commitments — and may get rather fervent in his objections to such treatment.

If the concept of lawfulness is correctly interpreted and properly integrated into an adventure or a campaign, no "desertion" of this sort will occur without extenuating circumstances—and in no event should a DM ever feel justified in decreeing that such an event *must* take place. It is the character's (and player's) right and responsibility to decide what to do. After that decision is made and carried out, it is the DM's right and responsibility to evaluate the "correctness" of the decision in light of the character's professed alignment. A lawful player character cannot be forced (by the DM *directly*) to do something unlawful, but should always be held accountable if it happens involuntarily as the result of a *game* activity, or if the character does it of his own free will.

The guidelines in the definitions of lawful neutral similarly apply to lawful evil characters, who must also respect "the system." A lawful evil monk will "fight fair" with, respect to lawfulness — that is, he will recognize and accept the challenge of an up-and-coming monk. He will respect the challenger's right to face him in hand-to-hand combat, because that's the foundation of the system which all monks are bound to uphold.

It is not lawful, for instance, for an evil monk to sequester himself in a stronghold while a mob of monsters stand guard to make sure no other monk can get to him. In such a situation, the lawful thing to do would be to allow the challenger to pass freely past all wards and obstacles — and then ambush the challenger from the shadows as soon as he's within striking range.

A lawful evil monk should have to "fight fair" in making it possible for the hand-to-hand combat to take place — but once the battle is joined (in most cases, begun by an evil sneak attack), it's every monk for himself. By contrast, a pair of lawful good monks competing for the same position would probably square off with great ceremony, like prizefighters or sumo wrestlers do, and conduct the whole matter as "fairly" as possible, including the presence of a referee.

And the two kinds of challenging don't mix easily. Only a very powerful or very self-confident evil monk would agree to an elaborate ceremonial combat against a good monk — and if he does consent to fight in this fashion, he's going to have something up his sleeve anyway.

* * *

If a monk's alignment changes from lawful to neutral or chaotic, does he become a thief?

Not necessarily. A monk whose alignment changes with respect to law and chaos "loses all monk abilities and must begin again as a first-level character," according to the Players Handbook. The character's new class can be anything else. It stands to reason that most "defrocked" monks would choose to be a fighter, cleric or thief, because the prime requisites for those classes are the abilities for which a monk must always have above-average scores. But it's not impossible for a monk character to have a high intelligence as well as the other high scores, in which case that character might decide to begin again as a magic-user.

* * *

Can a human fighter split class into a monk if he has the required abilities?

Even though the answer to this question can easily be found in the AD&D rules, it gives the sage an opportunity to emphasize some points which a lot of players and DMs seem to have misinterpreted. Assuming that "split class" means "become multi-classed," the answer is NO. Humans cannot be multi-classed characters, *period*. And, since only humans can become monks, no character can be a multi-classed monk. If "split class" instead means "become a character with two classes," the answer is a qualified yes. Nothing in the rule books specifically prohibits a character from taking up the monk class as a second class, or temporarily abandoning monkish pursuits to gain experience in a new class. However, a monk (or would-be monk) who travels this path would effectively forsake all chance of advancement to the higher levels of the monk class — and it should probably be stipulated that no upper-level monk (8th or higher) can decide to stop being a monk and take up a new class in any event, because an unlawful act of that sort would seriously harm the monkish organizational structure. The Players Handbook says that "nearly any combination of, classes" is possible, but points out that alignment restrictions will make some switches impossible without being disqualified from the former class; for instance, a monk (must be lawful) can never decide to study as a druid (must be true neutral) without changing alignment and losing his right to be a monk, or vice versa.

* * *

The Players Handbook says that monks fight on the table used by thieves and assassins, but the DMG puts monks on the same combat table as clerics and druids. Which is correct?

The Dungeon Masters Guide is the right source. Monks were placed on the thief's attack matrix when the Players Handbook was being compiled, but by the time the DMG was released, the decision had been made (in the interest of game balance) to have monks attack on the more favorable table for clerics and druids. In most cases where the Players Handbook and Dungeon Masters Guide disagree on a specific subject, it is safe to assume that the ruling in the DMG is to be given preference, since that book was released after the Players Handbook.

* * *

My monk with a dexterity of 15 was hit in the leg by an arrow. The DM said there would be a temporary loss of 3 dexterity points, and later he said that one of those points would be lost permanently. He took away half of my experience points (the character was first level) and said I'd have to change classes because the character no longer met the minimum requirements for being a monk.. Is this proper? If I change, would I keep any of the abilities of the former class?

It sounds like you've willingly accepted the "fact" that you have permanently lost a point of dexterity from a relatively minor wound — yet that's really the heart of your problem. It seems as though your DM was determined to find a way to keep you from playing that character as a monk. This sage doesn't have ESP, of course, and it's impossible to know the details of this incident, but any DM who decides to have such a tragedy befall a first-level character had better have a very good reason for acting that way.

There is nothing in the AD&D rules to suggest that a character has to abandon his or her chosen class because of a drop in an ability score anyway. Ability scores are not infrequently raised or lowered by various magical means, and by certain types of psionic attacks. The life of a character or a long-running campaign would be thrown into disorder if characters were forced to change classes every time an ability score fell below the minimum number originally needed to qualify for membership in that class.

If it were mandatory for a character to change class whenever an important ability score was lowered during the course of an adventure, what would be the fate of, for instance, a character rendered feeble-minded by a psionic blast attack? Such a character, with (by definition) a combined intelligence and wisdom score of 0-5 for the duration of the feeblemind effect, technically doesn't qualify for any class of adventurer.

There are certain types of magical attacks which cause the loss of a point of strength or some other attribute. Losses of this kind are sometimes only temporary (the strength drain of a shadow, for instance), and even so-called "permanent" changes can be counteracted by different magical means at a later time. There may be occasions when a character has lost so much of his original attribute score that it is not practical or healthy to continue in the same class: A human fighter who has his strength reduced to, say, 6 points is risking ruin if he sets out on an adventure in that condition, and the character might stand a better chance of survival in the long run if he decided to take up magic-using (assuming a sufficiently high intelligence to do that). But the choice should belong to the character and player, not to the DM.

In the descriptions of the fighter, paladin and thief player character classes in the Players Handbook, the rules state that certain minimum ability scores are needed to "become" a member of that class. The same reasoning should be applied to those classes where the same wording is not used. In other words, minimum requirements have to be met when a character

begins a career in a class, but not necessarily at all times thereafter while that profession is being pursued.

* * *

When a player character monk attains 8th level or higher, will there be non-player character monks seeking to defeat him in combat so as to attain his level? Will he always have to combat higher-level NPCs when this is necessary to attain the next level?

In a well structured campaign, there will be a monkish hierarchy even if there is only one monk player character of sufficiently high level to challenge for another monk's position. In the extreme, this hierarchy would be delineated all the way up to the Grand Master of Flowers—a total of 12 positions (from 8th level through 17th) which would all be filled by NPCs if no player character has yet advanced beyond 7th level. At the least, the DM should provide opposition for a player character as it becomes necessary: Be sure there is an 8th-level monk for the upstart player character to battle, when the time comes, and have other "titleholders" prepared and ready to play if the player character rises even higher.

The rules about advancement for monks are specific: A monk must meet a higher-level monk in hand-to-hand combat when the lower-level monk obtains enough experience points to qualify for ascension to the next level. This presumes the existence of higher-level monks, which the DM must provide if player characters do not already fill those positions. Otherwise, the lower-level PC monk's efforts to rise in level, obtain experience points and strive for greater prowess and superiority become meaningless.

It doesn't necessarily work the same way when a player char-

acter is in a position to be challenged by a lower-level monk. It is not mandatory for higher-level PC monks to face challenges from lower-level aspirants, but such challenges will certainly come about in a campaign where the DM actively employs NPC monks, charting their advancement up the experience-point ladder just as for player characters. Challenges to a player character monk do not ever *have* to occur, but it would be ridiculous for a player character to make it all the way to Grand Master of Flowers without ever facing a bid for his position from a lower-level contender.

* * *

Will a monk's open hand attack affect creatures which can be hit only by magical weapons?

The sage says no. It doesn't specifically say in the rules that a monk can hit in this fashion, so the only possible ruling to make is that a monk cannot. As soon as we start giving characters and creatures attributes that aren't specifically prohibited to them, the ruination of the campaign is not far behind.

There is some justification for this ruling to be found in the way certain other rules are worded. The PH *does* specifically say that a monk can't use his special dodging ability on magical missiles, and that the quivering palm — "perhaps the most terrible power" a monk has (in the words of the Players Handbook), is not usable against creatures which are only vulnerable to magic weapons. In that light, there is no rationale for allowing an open hand attack, certainly not as "terrible" a power, to be useful in the same circumstances. The Dungeon Masters Guide sums it up with the statement, "...monks are not supermen or superwomen." Monks have a number of special abilities which set them apart — but not that far apart.


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The Oracle

When he talks, everybody listens

by Andrew Dewar

Ever since *homo sapiens* learned how to use his brain, there has always been a part of man's mind that desires to know the events of the future, not only so that he can prepare for them, but also "simply" so that his curiosity might be satisfied. To fill this need, there have long been people claiming to be able to divine those events.

But there is also a desire to know events of the present as well, and events of the unknown past. And, there have also arisen those people who say they can divine these things. As long as man is curious about the things he does not know, there will be other men who will

believe that they are able to satisfy this curiosity through mystical means.

These men and women are the oracles, a legendary type of person presented here as a new non-player character class for ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® adventuring.

Ancient Greeks trusted the famous oracle at Delphi. The traditional procedure by which divinations were obtained involved virgins (ceremonially named "Pythia," after a serpent slain by Apollo) who were seated on a tripod over a rift, from which rose thick vapors and, so the Greeks believed, the wisdom of Apollo. The ancients had so much faith that they believed whatever the oracle of Delphi prophesied would invariably come true.

Eastern religions have long put great stock in oracular hermits living away from the people, who they believed had great and god-given wisdom. Such an oracle, they felt, could tell them the truth about their fates, and the fates of their gods.

In more modern times, gypsy fortune tellers have gained a reputation for mystical ability, although society is more skeptical of such persons than earlier civilizations had been. Still today, there are mediums and fortune tellers making money from people who want to believe that oracular ability can truly exist, and who need their curiosity satisfied in one way or another.

In an AD&D™ campaign (which, of

Oracle Experience Table

Experience Points	Experience Level	4-sided Dice for Accumulated Hit Points	Level Title	60,001—110,000	7	7	Sannyasi
0—2,250	1	1	Fortune Teller	110,001—200,000	8	8	Medium
2,251—4,500	2	2	Forecaster	200,001—366,000	9	9	Pundit
4,501—9,000	3	3	Augurist	360,001—630,000	10	10	Mahatma
9,001—17,500	4	4	Anagogue	630,001—1,000,000	11	11	Soothsayer
17,501—33,500	5	5	Clairvoyant	1,000,001—1,400,000	12	12	Seer
33,501—60,000	6	6	Sortiliger	1,400,001—1,800,000	13	13	Low Prophet
				1,800,001—2,200,000	14	14	High Prophet
				2,200,001—2,700,000	15	15	Oracle
				2,700,001+	16	16	Great Oracle

course, strays a long way from "reality"), divination plays a large part in the lives of adventurers. A great number of simple spells, including all the Detect spells, are divinations. Also, there are a number of non-player character classes that can make predictions for paying clients: the sage, the alchemist, and the astrologer. It seems that adventurers, even more so than people in this real, mundane world of ours, need to know of the future, or of the nature of things unclear to themselves. Often, having this knowledge means the difference between life and death.

The sage, as outlined on pages 31-33 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, is somewhat inadequate for making divinations. Unless the sage's major field is the occult and things oracular in the first place, he will cost the party seeking his aid a great deal and will be little help.

Similarly, the alchemist (as presented by Roger E. Moore in issue #45 of *DRAGON*™ magazine) is somewhat lacking in oracular ability, preferring to spend his time as the sage does, buried in books and alchemical experimentation. Thus, he will not be able to help a party greatly when they come to him for aid.

Most useful is Roger Moore's astrologer class, also presented in *DRAGON* #45. The main function of the astrologer is to make divinations; however, the astrologer himself is limited in his abilities. That is, he has only one method of divination available to him, which somewhat reduces the reliability of his predictions. Also, the astrologer cannot use spells, and so cannot perform even the simplest Detect for adventurers.

The Oracle NPC class

The following text describes the Oracle as a new non-player character class, one which gives its members the ability to cast spells and use certain innate abilities in order to make divinations and predictions. An Oracle NPC in an adventuring party would leave the other spellcasters free to carry more attack and defense spells, enhancing the characters' chance of survival if the adventure ahead is to be full of conflicts and combat.

The principal attributes of the oracle are intelligence and wisdom, both of which must be 14 or higher. A high constitution and charisma are also useful, but these attributes may each be as low as 6. A high wisdom score allows the oracle to use extra spells, as follows:

Wisdom	Extra Spells
15	1 first level spell
16	1 first level spell
17	1 second level spell
18	1 third level spell

These bonuses are cumulative, just as for clerics with high wisdom.

Similarly, a high intelligence score offers special benefits to the oracle above

and beyond the usual extra language ability, as follows:

Intelligence	Bonus to chance of successful divination
16	+5%
17	+10%
18	+15%

Note that this extra chance of success applies only to certain of the innate abilities, but to none of the divination spells available to oracles.

Oracles are most often human. Elves and half-elves may also be of this class, but may not rise higher than the 11th level of experience. Gnomes and dwarves are of a temperament not well suited to the disciplines of oracular ability, and half-orcs and halflings rarely possess the mental faculties to qualify. Thus, these last four races should be prohibited from taking up the class.

The experience-level structure among oracles is similar in some ways to that of druids and monks, in that the numbers of characters at certain levels is restricted. While there may be any number of oracles between the first and 11th levels, there are only one each of the higher-level oracles.

A character wishing to rise from 11th level to 12th (Soothsayer to Seer), after earning sufficient experience points, must seek out the single Seer and challenge him or her to a game of riddles. *Dungeon Masters* are referred to Patricia McKillip's *Hed* trilogy or J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* to see how this might be done. The winner of this game becomes (or continues to be) the Seer, entitled to the possessions and abilities that go with the title. After a month of self-training, a character newly claiming the title of Seer will be able to use new spells and certain innate abilities. As with other combats of this type, the loser returns to the minimum number of experience points allowable for the 11th level (630,001 xp), and must begin to climb again. A riddle-game may not be attempted until a Soothsayer has sufficient experience points to rise a level. It should be noted that the Seer is in a precarious position, since there are usually many who come to challenge him.

At 13th level and higher, there is no competition. A position in the higher levels becomes open only when its occupant dies. Then the character of the level immediately below the open position will move up into it, provided that he has enough experience points to fulfill that requirement. Every lower-ranking oracle then moves up accordingly (subject to the experience-point requirement), and if necessary a new Seer is chosen by a riddle-tournament held amongst any characters with enough experience points to claim the position. For example, if the Low Prophet were to die, the Seer (if he had enough experience) would move up to that position,

and a new Seer would be chosen from amongst the Soothsayers.

For each position above 11th level, there exists a vast and unique library, containing all of the information needed by an oracle of that level. Thus, a new Seer would find in his newly acquired library volumes containing the new spells he may use, along with equipment and instructions for his new innate abilities. The oracles possessing these libraries do not own them, but leave them behind for the next oracle when they rise in level.

Characters of 11th level and below, though, must seek training in the same way that characters of any other class must. They cannot impose upon oracles of 12th level or higher to give them this training, because oracles of that much stature are loath to waste time on such matters.

Oracles of lower than 12th level may carry or own whatever they wish (subject, of course, to a few class restrictions), and may travel about freely and hold any faith. Only the wisest and most intelligent of oracles ever make it to the higher levels, and although such advancement is the general goal of every oracle, most do not pursue it exclusively.

Higher-level oracles will never be kept in the service of a single person or a particular group of characters, but will live in some secluded part of the world where they will not often be disturbed. There, they study and expand their experience as much as they can. The lairs of these oracles are more or less permanent structures or enclosures, and they come with the position; when an oracle of high level rises, he often changes lairs as well. Thus, people tend to identify more with the positions and locations of oracles than with their individual names or identities.

In many ways, oracles are similar to magic-users. They fight and save on the M-U tables, they are subject to the same weapon and armor restrictions as magic-users, and they are able to use any device or magic item that a magic-user can employ. The only major difference between the classes (apart from certain innate special abilities) is in the way that spells are recovered; this will be described below.

It is possible for an oracle to be of any alignment, although those of the highest levels tend to be true neutral. In any case, that is a reflection on their temperament rather than their religious preference. An oracle, as he progresses in power and ability, will likely turn away from any extreme alignment and become more and more neutral in his outlook.

Similarly, an oracle may technically worship any god he wishes, but will tend to abandon his faith as he rises in level. Divinations need not, as the name would seem to suggest, come from a god, but

rather from the earth and the spheres. Gods must live by the laws of the universe in an AD&D game, just as men and beasts do, and thus oracles must go "beyond the gods" to achieve their predictions. They read things from the structure of the universe, which exists in spite of the gods rather than because of them, and there they find their answers. Thus, an oracle with an extremely fervent faith will not be liable to advance to the highest levels of his class, because his interpretation of the omens of the universe will be slanted by adherence to his faith.

At the 5th level of experience, an oracle begins to attract followers. At this point, he will gather one or two students of zero or first level. Upon attainment of each level higher than 5th, the maximum number of students is doubled; at 11th level, a Soothsayer may have as many as 128 students and followers of zero or

first level, or correspondingly fewer of higher levels (up to 4th). When a Soothsayer rises to Seer, however, he must abandon his followers and they likewise must abandon him. High-level oracles, as mentioned earlier, lead solitary lives and seek seclusion rather than the adoration of followers or students.

Innate powers

At each level of experience, oracles gain certain innate powers of divination. The accuracy and usefulness of these increase with the oracle's level.

The following chart gives the innate oracular abilities, the level at which each is first gained, and the chance of successful divination using that ability at that level and all higher levels of experience. Abilities where the chance for success may be improved by an intelligence bonus are marked by an asterisk.

Ability	Percentage chance for success at experience level															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Rhodomancy	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90
Arithomancy*	08	11	14	17	20	23	26	29	32	35	38	41	44	47	50	53
Cleromancy*	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	
Coscinomancy	12	16	20	24	28	32	36	40	44	48	52	56	60	64	68	
Austromancy*	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80		
Capnomancy*	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80		
(combined)*	45	60	75	90	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
Belomancy		15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75		
Hepatoscopy*		15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75		
Meteoromancy*			20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75		
Ornithomancy*				22	29	36	43	50	57	64	71	78	85	92		
Hydromancy*					22	29	36	43	50	57	64	71	78	85	92	
Hieromancy*						26	32	38	44	50	56	62	68	74	80	
Ophiomancy*						26	32	38	44	50	56	62	68	74	80	
Pyromancy*							30	38	46	52	60	68	76	84	92	
Botanomancy*							29	33	37	41	45	49	53	57	61	
(with spell)*							79	83	87	91	95	99	00	00	00	
Astromancy*								30	39	48	57	66	75	84	93	
Horoscopy*								30	39	48	57	66	75	84	93	
Oneirocritica*								30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	
Lithomancy*									30	40	50	60	70	80	90	
Dactylomancy									30	35	40	45	50	55	60	
Haruspicy*										35	50	65	80	95	99	
Sciomancy*											35	50	65	80	95	
Catoptromancy*												25	40	55	70	
Licanomancy*													40	60	80	
Gastromancy*														70	95	
Crystallomancy*															99	

Explanations of innate abilities

Rhodomancy: This is the art of dowsing for water or oil, or for metals of various types. Any forked wooden stick may be used, although hazelwood works best (+1% to chance of success per level of oracle).

The stick is held by the prongs with the palms of the hands facing upward and horizontal to the ground while the ends of the prongs project outward. The pointing end of the stick should be slightly elevated above horizontal. When water, or oil or metal, are directly beneath the rod, the end will force itself downward to indicate the presence of the substance.

Oil or water will be located by a simple,

bare wooden rod, but metals can be found by dowsing only if a bit of the metal sought is attached to the pointing end of the stick. Any metal of a non-magical nature can be dowsed for; however, metal which is used for currency or is valuable because of its rarity is located at a penalty of 10% to the chance for success. Iron, other common metals and common alloys (bronze, brass, etc.) can be found at no penalty.

Arithomancy: This, in essence, is numerology. An oracle will assign numbers to the letters in the name of a person, place or thing and make a divination about the nature of the thing so named and "numbered." This prediction will re-

veal, to some extent, whether the person, place or thing is good or evil, and whether it involves good fortune or bad. This ability incorporates the skills of onomancy, which considers the letters in a name themselves rather than the numbers they may represent.

Cleromancy: This is divination by lots. An oracle practicing this ability would cast down a number of small dice or tiny, marked bones, and make a prediction from the numbers that turn up. A successful divination will tell the oracle whether the characters asking for the divination (or himself, of course) will have good or bad fortune in the next week.

Coscinomancy: This is a method that an oracle may use to determine the guilt or responsibility of a known character in causing a known event. The oracle will balance a small brass sieve on two fingers, or on the points of a pair of shears (+5% to chance of success for any level of oracle), and then describe the event (a crime, usually). After that, the names of characters suspected of causing the event or committing the crime are spoken before the balancing sieve. If the divination is successful, and the name of the guilty character is spoken, the sieve will begin to wobble at that time, indicating guilt.

Austromancy: This means of divination allows the oracle to know whether the fortune of a character will be good or bad during the next week by studying the winds and the movements of clouds for a day.

Capnomancy: This method of divination achieves the same effect as austromancy, but the determination is through a day's study of the movements of smoke (in still air). During this time, a smoky fire must be maintained for the oracle.

If austromancy and captomancy are combined at the same time and in the same effort, the effects and length of time required remain the same, but the chance of successful divination triples.

Belomancy: This, like cleromancy, is a form of divination by lots; however, it uses arrows or notched sticks instead of dice. Answers to a question posed by a character are written on the arrows, and these, along with a single blank arrow, are placed in a bag. If the divination is successful, and the correct answer is among those written on arrows, the oracle will draw out of the bag the arrow with the correct answer. If the divination is not successful, though, the blank arrow will be drawn. Any arrow drawn from the bag after the first one will be blank, regardless of the number of blank arrows first placed in the bag. No question may be asked more than once; arrows for repeated questions will always be blank.

Hepatoscopy: This method of divination
(Turn to page 68)

HEROES OF OLYMPUS

TASK FORCE GAMES will soon be releasing their first true role playing game, **HEROES OF OLYMPUS**.

The model for **HEROES OF OLYMPUS** is the voyage of the Argo, on which the greatest heroes of Greek legend sailed in a quest for the Golden Fleece. The standard game is designed around the adventures of the Argonauts.

The very names of the Argonauts conjure stories of great deeds, powerful bodies, and the interplay of the gods with mankind: Jason (Captain of the Argo), Castor and Polydeuces (the Twins, potent in wrestling and boxing), Hercules (with his powerful club), Orpheus (musician without equal), Calais and Zetes (winged sons of the North Wind), Nauplius (navigator, son of Poseidon), Atlanta (she of fleet foot), and so many others, rich in royalty and many bearing the blood of the gods. On their journey they will encounter noble battle and treacherous misdeed, the assault of the Harpies and the threat of the Clashing Rocks, the hazards of the mighty Serpent that guards the Fleece, and the magic of the woman, Medea.

There are several options for the players of this game. They may adopt the roles of the actual Argonauts, or may create their own new heroes to see if they can do as well as those of the legend. In either case their characters will encounter the types of adventure faced by the crew of the Argo, all under the guidance and assistance of a gamemaster. They may continue this style of play as a campaign, with new scenarios available from Task Force or created by the gamemaster. Several scenarios may be repeatedly played as war games, rather than as role play, suitable for two sided play (or perhaps as solitaire games). The players in a campaign game may explore the game map, and obtain the mini-scenarios pertaining to the various feature locations designated on the map. Finally, the game is designed as a coherent system, that allows all of these options to be pursued, so that the same characters might be counters in a board game one evening, and role-played individuals in a fantasy adventure the next evening.

HEROES OF OLYMPUS will be available in fine game and hobby stores.

Understanding ARMORY

by Lewis Pulsipher

The term "heraldry" is widely used to denote the study and use of coats of arms to identify persons, families, or organizations. The correct term for this is "armory," while "heraldry" properly refers to all the duties of heralds. These duties included record keeping (especially of coats of arms), acting as messengers and negotiators, and organizing events such as tournaments, coronations, and celebrations. This article is concerned only with armory and its application to fantasy role-playing.

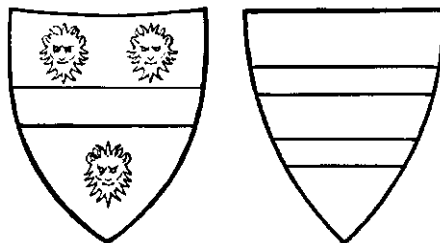
The origins of the use of coats of arms are obscure. In ancient Israel and Rajput India, badges were used to identify tribes or people loyal to a prince. The seal cylinders used in ancient Mesopotamia to identify persons, American Indian totems, and some flags are also distant relatives of armory.

Only Japan and western Europe developed true feudal systems, and only Japan developed something approaching the complex European system of armory: the "*mon*." This heraldic badge was never displayed large enough to be seen at some distance, like a coat of arms was displayed on a shield, but it resembles a coat of arms in many respects: It was used for decoration as well as identification, it was displayed by troops and retainers as well as by the man entitled to bear it, and after several centuries of use the privilege to bear the *mon* was confined to those legally registered with the sovereign's consent.

The purpose of the coat of arms was to identify at a distance the man carrying or wearing the colors. During the Norman conquest of England and the First Crusade (both in the eleventh century) coats of arms did not exist, though a few individuals might bear an animal figure on a shield. But as helms improved they covered more of a man's face, and armor also obscured the wearer's identity as it became more complex and covered more of the wearer's body. Moreover, the Crusaders, speaking a dozen different languages and unfamiliar with their new comrades, needed some simple means of recognizing one another. It was not

enough to know a man's nationality; troops were loyal to individuals, not to nations.

Gradually, leaders began to adopt simple colored patterns to display on shields, surcoats, and flags to extricate themselves and their followers from the anonymity of full armor. Words or letters would not have served, of course, in a world of nearly universal illiteracy. A large display was necessary in a military



Left: arms of Michael de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk; azure, a fess between three leopards' faces or. Right: arms of William Madault, Earl of Warwick; argent, two bars gules. (See text for an explanation of the descriptions.)

system dominated by armored cavalry, for it was vital to know whether a man was friend or foe before one charged.

Arms also served as patterns on seals and signet rings. In some cases, such as the Great Seal of England, any document not stamped with the proper seal had no validity or force in law.

At first the patterns adopted were simple, with ease of recognition uppermost in mind. But as more knights adopted arms, more elaborate patterns were needed to avoid duplication. Nevertheless, duplication could occur, on at least one occasion requiring the personal intervention of the King of England to determine who rightfully bore the arms.

It became evident that some record of who was entitled to which arms would help keep the peace. At this same time (fourteenth century), sovereigns began to grant arms to those deemed worthy, and finally it became illegal to adopt a coat of arms without consent of the sovereign. Military leaders usually adopted

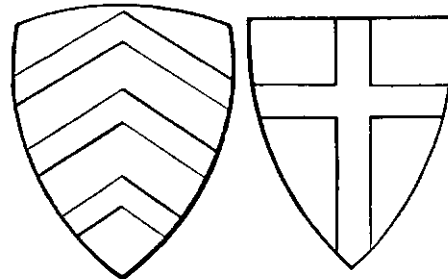
or obtained coats of arms, and so the holders of arms were usually nobility.

In parts of Europe, only those who could prove that all 16 of their great-great-grandparents were entitled to bear arms ("seize quartiers") could themselves bear arms. But in other areas, even certain peasants possessed coats of arms. Clergy also became associated with arms. The abbot of a monastery or bishop of a province carried the arms of the body he represented. And though clergy were not supposed to fight, many did so and consequently deserved arms to identify themselves and their retainers. Military orders (such as the Knights Templars) and guilds also obtained arms.

Before some of the rules and conventions of armory are described, it should be pointed out how armory may be incorporated into role-playing. First, the DM must decide where a country lies in the progression from assumed arms to granted arms. If the country is lawful or neutral, loyal and obedient to a single sovereign lord, then the lord may well have begun to grant arms while prohibiting the assumption of arms without his permission.

In a less orderly country, or an area ruled by a lord who owes nominal allegiance to a higher sovereign, powerful individuals may assume arms without fear of prosecution from the ruler, though they still must beware of a dispute with someone who already has similar arms. Such a dispute might be settled by battle or in a High Court.

Coats of arms may be held by any powerful individual, though fighters are



Left: arms of Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester and Hertford; or, three chevrons gules. Right: arms of Roger le Bigod, Earl of Norfolk; or, a cross gules.

most likely to have arms, and a man with many retainers, even a merchant or other non-adventurer, is more likely to require arms than is a lone magic-user or thief. Possession of arms is considered to be a prerogative of a gentleman, so a thief or other person living on the fringes of acceptable society is not likely to bear arms.

In chaotic areas, duplication of arms might be common, even deliberate. Many leaders might not bear arms at all, preferring some other method of identification such as a distinctive style of armor or helmet.

In any area where infantry rather than cavalry dominates the armed forces, coats of arms could be less commonly used. Of course, flags can incorporate coats of arms, but they can also represent nations rather than individual lords. Where only the arms are used for identification, it is possible to impersonate an individual or pretend to be a group of retainers of some lord. There are many opportunities to make armory and heraldry a part of the game if the DM is willing to do the necessary groundwork. The descriptions and definitions below are merely an introduction; in order to understand armory better, the reader should consult reference works such as those listed in the bibliography.

The language of armory

An "achievement of arms" or "armorial bearings" consists of several elements—the crest, helm, supporters, mantling, and shield. But for the original purpose (identification) only a patterned shield was used, and this is the only element this article will describe.

Armory uses a special language, descended from French and Old English, to describe the pattern of arms. While the details can become complex, the objective was to describe the pattern briefly, elegantly, and uniquely, however strange the words may sound today. As the elements of the patterns are discussed, some of the words needed to *blazon*, or describe, the arms will be introduced.

Only nine contrasting *tinctures* are used on a shield, divided into five *colors*, two *metals*, and two *furs*. For practical use, the metals can be considered two additional colors, while the furs are patterns of two other tinctures. The colors are black (*sable*), red (*gules*), blue (*azure*), green (*vert*), and purple (*purpure*). In England, orange-brown (*tenne*) and sanguine (*murry*) are occasionally used, but they are regarded as tainted colors indicating illegitimacy or other fault or flaw in the bearer's ancestry.

The metals are gold (*or*), usually represented as yellow, and silver (*argent*), usually shown as white.

The rarely used furs are *ermine* and *vair*. Ermine is an argent background covered by regularly spaced black marks,

which consist of an arrowhead surmounted by three small dots, one just above the point and one to either side and slightly lower. This "fur" derives from the fur of the arctic stoat (ermine), which, used as the lining of cloaks, became a symbol of rank and office. *Vair* (from an unusual squirrel fur) is represented by rows of bell shapes, the argent upside down and the other tincture (usually azure) right side up so that the two rows fit together alternately; four sets cover the shield.

The first element of the *blazon* (description) is the tincture of the shield as a whole, the *field*. Occasionally the field may be a pattern of small objects, similar in effect to one of the furs. Next comes the *charge*, describing the object placed over the field. Sometimes a party field (a field of two tinctures used in roughly equal amounts) is used without a basic charge.

The field and charge alone are enough to construct many distinctive patterns, but most arms include elaborations of the charge. These include heraldic animals, crosses, towers, abstract shapes, common beasts—virtually anything the originator of the arms desires.

Arms may be *differentenced* and *marshalled* as well, to indicate marriage alliances, sons, bastardy, and the like. Differencing and marshalling can be a complicated subject, and should be pursued further only by those readers who are sufficiently interested.

Anatomy of the field

The rule of armory is that no color should be placed on a color and no metal on a metal. For example, a gold charge may be placed on a blue background (or vice versa), but a gold charge should not

be placed on a silver background. This rule was adopted to heighten contrast and improve visibility at a distance. It is done, however, and whether the rule should be enforced (and how) must be left to each DM.

The parts of the field are named in the language of armory as follows. The left side or *flank* as one looks at the shield is the *dexter*, the right side the *sinister*. (These latter terms derive from the Latin for right and left, respectively, but this is from the viewpoint of someone *behind* the shield, the one holding it.)

The *chief* is the top third of the field; the *fess* is the middle third; and the *base* is the bottom third. The blazon for a red shield with a white top third, then, is "*gules, a chief argent*."

The parts of the shield which comprise the basic charges are also known as *ordinaries*. There are other ordinaries besides the chief, fess and base which do not so easily correspond to parts of the field. A *pale* is a broad vertical line running from the top to bottom of the shield through the middle. A *chevron* is an inverted "V" not quite reaching the top of the shield, but entering the chief at its point. The *bend* is a diagonal bar running from upper left to lower right. A *saltire* is a narrower bend plus a bend sinister—that is, a bend running from lower left to upper right; the entire design looks like an "X."

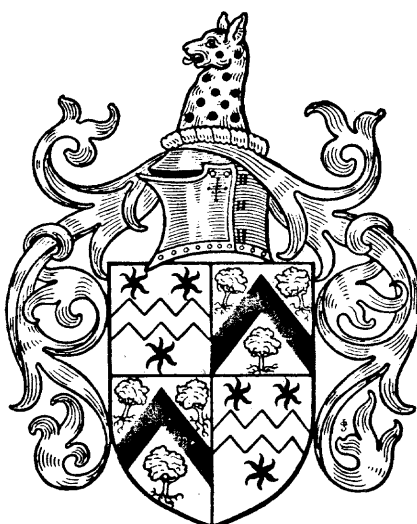
The lines followed by the ordinaries may be used to divide the shield *per party*. For example, *per party saltire* (or just *per saltire*) is a shield divided into four quarters by an "X." A shield divided by a cross would be *quarterly*. There are many variations on these basic patterns, such as *bendy* (several narrow bends parallel to each other), a chief *indented* (with a sawtooth-like boundary rather than a straight-line boundary), or a cross *wavy* (with a wavy rather than a straight outline), or *bordure* (a narrow border all around the field).

Thus, a shield "*per pale gules and azure a chevron or, a bordure sable*" is red on the left, blue on the right, with an inverted yellow V over the colors of the field and a black border around the shield. A book of heraldry will describe many other combinations.

Charges: decoration and identification

The primary charges on the field can be virtually anything. There are conventional drawings (and special names) for the more common charges, as well as a language for describing how the charge is arranged when there can be doubt. For example, it is not enough to say where an animal is on the shield; its facing and attitude must also be stated to avoid ambiguity.

When a man assumed arms, he often chose charges symbolic of himself or his family. The less solemn might make a



Armorial bearings of John Comber, Esq.: Arms described as quarterly, 1 and 4, or, a fess dancette' gules, between three estoiles sable; 2 and 3, argent, a chevron sable, between three thorn trees proper.

play on words, such as the family of Catt, Catton, or Keats using a cat as a charge. William Shakespeare's arms showed a hand grasping several spears. An animal related to the location or nature of his estates, such as a fish for an island-dwelling knight, might be preferred.

The more serious or idealistic might choose symbols to emphasize their courage or good fortune. Thus the lion, symbol of valor, was a favorite charge, and the dragon likewise. Religious piety could be expressed in the arms. The Christian (Latin) cross is the classic means, but a special cross of Calvary, angels, or other religious symbols might be used.

A list of some types of popular charges includes: divine beings, humans, lions, deer (stag, hind, etc.), felines (cat, panther, Bengal tiger, etc.), bears, elephants, camels, birds, fish, insects, monster (dragons, wyverns, unicorns, griffons, etc.), celestial objects (sun, moon, stars ["*etoiles*"], clouds), trees, plants, flowers (fleur-de-lis, rose, etc.), and certain inanimate objects (castle, five-pointed star ["*mullet*"], caltrop, whirlpool, galley, sword). When a charge is presented in its natural color, the blazon is said to be "*proper*."

Four-legged animals are frequently used as charges. The common attitudes are defined below. (Generally, the tail is erect.)

Rampant (as "*a lion rampant*"): Animal stands on one hind leg with three legs in the air at different angles.

Passant: Three legs are on the ground with the dexter foreleg raised to head height. The tail curves over the back.

Salient: Leaping, but with both hind legs still on the ground. (The "ground" the animal stands on is never shown, of course.)

Stant: As passant, but with all four legs on the ground.

Sejant: Seated on hindquarters with all legs on the ground. (*Sejant erect*: Front paws are high in the air at different angles.)

Couchant: Legs and belly are on the ground but head and tail are held high, the tail first passing between the legs.

Dormant: As couchant, but with head down and tail on the ground — sleeping, in effect.



Armorial bearings of Pirrie of Belfast: Arms described as argent, a saltire gules, between in chief and in base a bugle-horn stringed sable, and in fess two seahorses respecting one another proper. Crest is described as "on a wreath of the colours, a falcon's head erased per saltire argent and gules." The motto reads "Deeds, not words."

In all positions the animal faces to the dexter. Other terms (below) describe the head position. Unless one of these is used, the head also faces to the dexter.

Guardant: Head faces the person looking at the shield.

Reguardant: Head looks backward over the animal's shoulder.

An animal "*sinister*" (as in "*Lion passant guardant sinister*") faces the right side of the shield as we look at it.

Blazoning is fairly simple once you pick up some of the vocabulary. After reading just a few paragraphs, you know what that strange concoction, "*a lion rampant guardant or*," means. *Boutell's Heraldry* (see bibliography) gives descriptions of all the terms you'll ever want to look up.

The use of arms in gaming

There are a myriad of ways for the DM to incorporate the use of armory in the campaign. Three general suggestions are given below, and should cause other possibilities to come to mind.

First, a player who possesses arms hears of or meets a non-player character with similar arms. Is this an honest mistake, or is the NPC trying to deceive others? The player character can hardly ignore the situation — he'll have to investigate further.

Second, some non-player character accuses a player character of stealing the accuser's armorial bearings. A challenge to combat or an appeal to the high court may result. The accusation may be only a means to some dark end.

Third, in order to accomplish some goal the player desires — for example, marriage to a noble's daughter, he must earn arms from the King. This means he must visit the King (a wilderness adventure in itself) to discover what he can do to earn arms, and then he'll have to accomplish that task.

Bibliography

Dozens of books about heraldry have been published in the past twenty years. In general, one is better off avoiding the older books, especially those of the last century.

J. P. Brooke-Little, ed., *Boutell's Heraldry*

L. G. Pine, *Teach Yourself Heraldry*
Charles MacKinnon, *Observers Book of Heraldry*

(Editor's note: Illustrations for this article, and the descriptions accompanying those illustrations, were taken from "*The Art of Heraldry*" by Arthur Charles Fox-Davies, published in 1976 by Arno Press, New York. Readers are referred to that book or a similar reference work for definitions of terms mentioned in the captions which are not included in the author's text. There are far too many specific terms used in armory and heraldry for an article of this scope to be able to cover them all. The meaning of many of the terms can be figured out by matching the elements of a description with its accompanying picture.)

Of course, the best place to start is the encyclopedia. Most heraldry books will tell you far more than you'll ever want to know; an encyclopedia gives you a more manageable dose.

(Editor's note: Examples of the use of heraldry in fantasy role-playing may be found in *THE WORLD OF GREYHAWK™* fantasy world setting by Gary Gygax, produced by TSR Hobbies, Inc.)

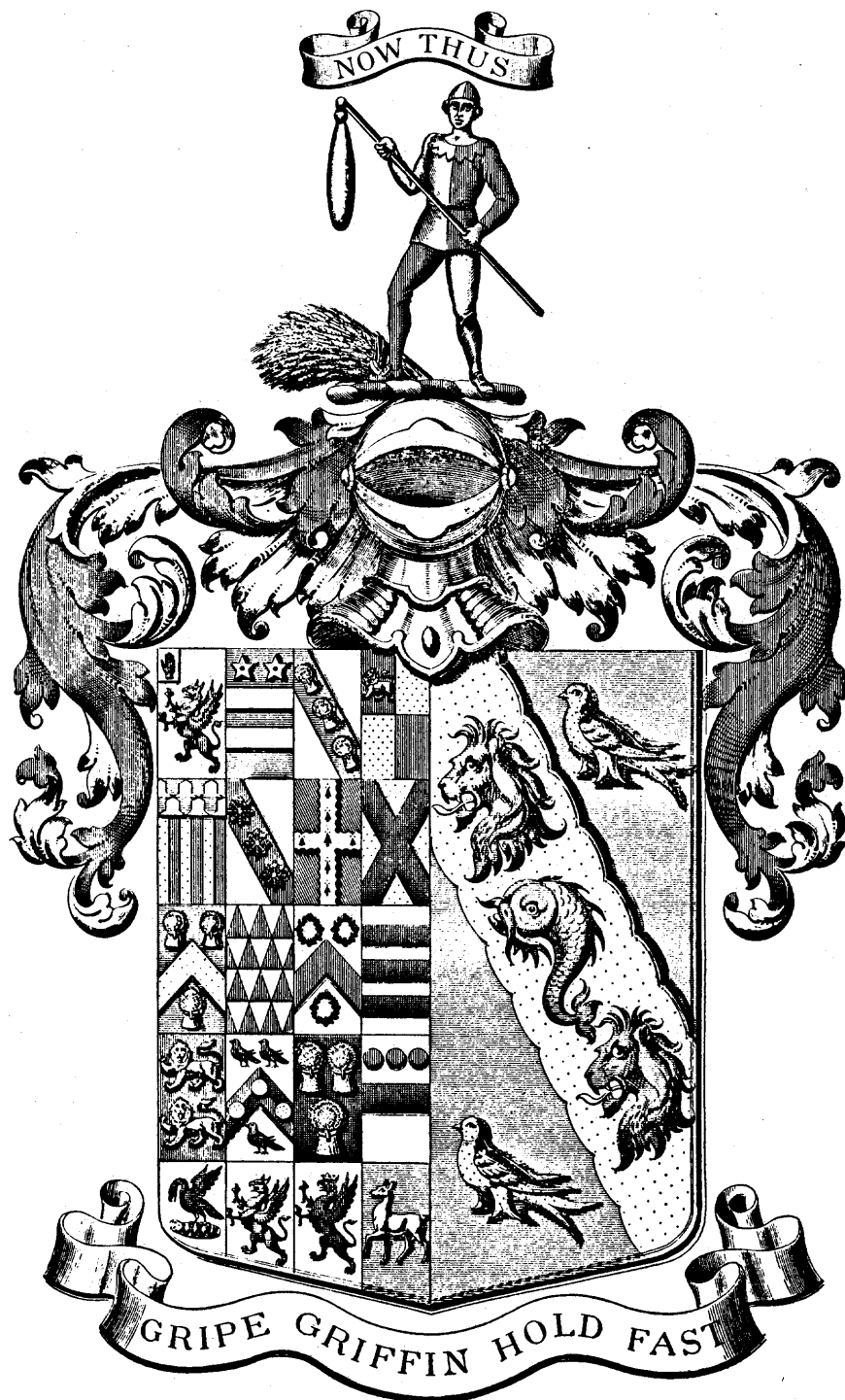
The front and back covers of this playing aid are crowded with full-color arms for the various nations described within. Some traditional heraldic rules such as color combinations are broken, but this is in the name of artistic license to produce a better-looking product.

Many of the arms were designed to correspond to the factions they represented: The arms of the Free City of Greyhawk have a broken chain over a wailed city; the Orcs of the Pomarj have a grinning skull; the Hold of Stonefist — you guessed it, a stone fist.

A total of 78 arms are depicted, and there is a brief discussion on orders of knighthood and how they may conflict and compete in a fantasy world setting.)



Lion stantant (left), lion passant guardant (top right), and lion passant reguardant (bottom right).



This reproduction of the armorial bearings of Sir Humphrey Francis de Trafford illustrates how complex an armory design could be. The elements of the arms are described as follows: Quarterly of twenty, 1. argent, a griffin segreant gules; 2. argent, two bears, and in chief two mullets pierced azure; 3. argent, on a bend azure, three garbs proper; 4. quarterly, gules and or, in the first quarter a lion passant argent; 5. paly of six argent and gules, a chief vaire; 6. argent, on a bend gules, three escarbuncles sable; 7. vert, a cross engrailed ermine; 8. or, a saltire sable; 9. azure, a chevron argent, between three garbs proper; 10. bendy barry gules and argent; 11. argent, a chevron gules, between three chaplets; 12. argent, three bars sable; 13. gules, two lions passant guardant in pale argent; 14. argent, on a chevron quarterly gules and sable, between three birds of the second as many bezants; 15. argent, three garbs proper, banded or; 16. argent, a fess sable, in chief three torteaux; 17. argent on a child proper, wrapped in swaddling clothes gules, and banded or, an eagle sable; 18. argent, a griffin segreant azure; 19. argent, a griffin segreant sable, ducally crowned or; 20. azure, a hind trippant argent, and impaling the arms of Franklin, namely: azure, on a bend invected between two martlets or, a dolphin naiant between two lions' heads erased of the field.



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See the April '81 DRAGON for description of dice.

Some universal rules

Making your own campaign

— and making it work

by Roger E. Moore

Something that tends to happen when different people in an ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® campaign take turns serving as the Dungeon Master is that alternate (or parallel) universes start to proliferate. I don't know how it is for the other AD&D™ groups out there, but in all three of the groups I've been with there seems to have been a minimum of three or four different universes in operation at any given time, with the characters travelling back and forth depending upon who was the DM at the time. In one campaign there were no less than eight universes, and it was a lot like living in Philip Jose Farmer's *World of Tiers* novels. This makes for a wide variety of adventure, certainly, and each DM gets to run things as he/she would like to see them run.

I started the process of universe creation myself a few months ago, after DM'ing an adventure in the *City State of the Invincible Overlord* for the hundredth time. As worthy and enjoyable as that game world is, I and my players needed a change. And I wanted to run my *own* universe. Fortunately I had some vacation time coming up, so I went somewhere quiet and near a MacDonald's restaurant and began working up a world.

One of the most valuable assets one can have in universe creation is a familiarity with other people's universes. I've read of places such as Urshurak, Wonderland, Zothique, Cimmeria, the Nightland, and dozens of others. I've also played the GAMMA WORLD™ and BOOT HILL™ games as well as AD&D adventures. I remember the *feel* of each of these worlds and how it was created by the author.

The first major problem I had was deciding whether I wanted to recreate one of the fantasy universes I'd read about, or make my world wholly original. This was a difficult decision. I remembered the fun on one expedition when we crossed universes and became confused about our whereabouts until someone in the party noticed that the road we were traveling on was composed of yellow brick....

Doubtless, it would be great fun to visit the Emerald City, or fight with Conan at

your side, or lift a glass of mead at the Prancing Pony in Bree. The problem is setting up such a "borrowed" universe to begin with. Familiarity with some universes requires a working knowledge of several volumes of literature. How many Oz books were written? How many Elric books? Tolkein's Middle Earth books? The amount of material from which one must draw can be staggering.

Then the inconsistencies appear between aspects of the AD&D rules and their namesakes in fantasy literature. The elves of Middle Earth are *immortal*, not just long-lived. The dwarves of *The Sword of Shannara's* world, *Rocannon's World* and of Carolingian Europe (*Three Hearts and Three Lions*) are not alike at all and only remotely resemble the AD&D conception of them. Ourboros Mercury uses completely new dominant races called Demons, Witches, and Pixes, with no similarity whatsoever to what the game rules call a demon, witch, and pixie. Ad infinitum.

Universes taken from literature can be excellent for limited adventuring, but this way of playing can destroy balance in a campaign unless it is carefully controlled. Conversely, reshaping the book's universe to fit the AD&D rules may distort or destroy the originality and balance of the former. Can you see making Elrond *not* immortal? How could you handle that?

I set aside my designs for a "book universe" — with some reluctance — and turned to working out an original universe. Some broad rules were needed for its nature. I decided at the outset not to mess with the rules in the AD&D manuals to any great extent, because balance and playability are the most important elements of any successful game universe. I remembered playing in realms where anyone (or anything) could be a paladin, where gods walked among the party and gave you artifacts and levels for just tying their shoes, and where magical weapons were so powerful that the gods themselves could be slain with impunity: *gods*, not just archdevils.

The game balance went so far out of whack that we lost all sense of proportion. "Another million gold. Ho hum." Some people would argue that the group's power is balanced in a "give-

away" campaign by tougher monsters. Many DM's (including myself) have fallen to the temptation of matching firepower with firepower, ignoring the regular monster charts. Beasties like I bathene and Phase Dopplegancer Balor-Trolls start making the rounds more frequently.

The arms race escalates, and game balance and proportion collapse at the same time. Soon one day, you'll hear one of the players say, "Gee, remember the old days when orcs were something to think about?" If you want to avoid being stung by such comments (like I was), then you'll try harder to keep the campaign balanced.

What's your universe going to look like? It's generally a good idea to place your campaign on a planet, enabling you to define natural events like day and night, eclipses, seasons, etc. The world doesn't have to be round, of course. It can be any other shape you feel is reasonable, but it should be large enough for a long period of exploration. Examples of alternatives to the spherical-planet universe may be found in the *World of Tiers* series by Philip Jose Farmer and in some of the works by Larry Niven. (*Ringworld*, *A Hole in Space*). Be sure you know what you're doing when you do it; it isn't necessary to draw out the entire planet's surface before the adventurers get there, but it may be helpful to have rough sketches in mind of the major land masses, oceans, moons and suns, etc.

I chose a planet. I also wanted to give the general environment a quality unlike the usual campaign in the near-tropics of the City State. I wanted a change in the type of encounters the party would have. The options I had included making the environment hotter, colder, wetter, drier, brighter, darker, more or less magically oriented (as opposed to more or less fighter-oriented), more or fewer elves/dwarves/orcs/trolls/etc. I happen to like winter, so I considered an earth-like planet farther from its sun than our home. The consequences would include a shorter and poorer growing season, so that herding and hunting remain predominant ways of life. Cities might be fewer in number, and nomadic peoples might become more frequent. Much of the fauna would likely be giant-sized to offset the effects of the cold.

All of this would mean the campaign might be tougher than usual, and I'd have to make sure the party wasn't set up to be creamed in the first encounter. A check in the Monster Manual and the Dungeon Masters Guide gave some ideas of the types of encounters the party would have, and I made pages of notes on what was likely to exist on my world (like sabertooths) and what wasn't (couatl, for instance). "Titan" was well on the way to completion. Or so I thought.

The encounter table gave me more trouble than I'd expected. It became clear that men and gnolls would be frequent adversaries on Titan, considering their natures and the relative abundance of both races. Dwarves and elves, however, didn't show up on the arctic or sub-arctic tables in the DMG, so I "created" them in very small numbers and placed them in generally limited areas. Kobolds, gnomes, and goblins went into near extinction, with only a handful of gnomes living with the dwarves. Trolls were more common than usual, and giant animals more abundant than any other type of creature. Frost giants became dominant among their kind.

Certainly I knew I wasn't going to have every creature in the Monster Manual, but I balanced the whole in proportions similar to those in the DMG and had enough monsters to the point I felt variety wasn't lacking. After some thought, I

created a few monsters of my own and added them to the landscape. White puddings (like the black ones, only white), cryohydra (like pyrohydra, only with a frosty breath), giant arctic spiders, and so on, found their place in the world.

I assumed that Titan had been populated by greater deities or the like from polar climates of other worlds, so the mythos I used involved some gods from Norse mythology, as well as any other gods I felt might be appropriate. Since the level of culture was rather primitive and barbaric, war gods might be somewhat more frequent. The gnolls would worship their demon prince, the dwarves would go for Thor or Mahal (Aule the Smith from *The Silmarillion*), and the elves would like Norse and Tolkien gods. The ice toads and trolls would likely worship anything that looked unusual, like ancient statues, big gems, or each other. Some ice devils might find the locale to be pleasant, and they would bring the worship of Geryon to their neighbors. An eclectic mythos would develop, and possibly take on added dimensions from the environmental factors and from the history of the inhabitants themselves.

As for the planet's history, I decided it was several thousands of years old as far as the participation of the inhabitants themselves. One or more deities either terraformed the world or found it habitable by certain species (possibly already

inhabited), and then proceeded to colonize it with creatures found in an AD&D campaign. The histories of individual tribes and cities would vary, but would in general be leading toward a more organized, centralized human civilization and a more widespread area of gnomldom.

The conflicts of law and chaos, good and evil, would still go on. Because of alignment and material needs, I had men and dwarves be closely allied in general, with elves being somewhat distant but providing assistance because of their basic good nature.

Gnolls, ogres, and trolls banded together and formed a powerful chaotic evil coalition, which caused a general shift in human alignment toward lawful good. The villains' alignment being what it is, of course, the evil coalition is unstable and its broad plans of conquest are often hamstrung by infighting.

I also created a small list of special personalities that might be found in the local playing area, such as the local gnoll chieftain and the humans and dwarves of high levels (like that 16th level Wizard in the tower on a mountain peak, and the dwarven armorer for the adventurers' town). The towns, lairs, and wanderers in a 100-mile radius were developed in detail, and the place where the adventurers were to "pop in" was set near a small town with a wooden palisade wall and large herds of livestock.

This is Free Trader Beowulf,
calling anyone. . .
Mayday, Mayday. . . we are under
attack. . . main drive is gone. . .
turret number one not responding. . .
Mayday. . . losing cabin pressure
fast. . . calling anyone. . . please help. . .
This is Free Trader Beowulf. . .
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However, there is now the question of how to get people from Universe A to Universe B. The Dungeon Master can arbitrarily declare the party to be transported to the new universe without any explanation, but this chops up the continuity of the campaign and is too ambiguous. The groups I've played with at Mannheim, Germany, and Fort Bragg, N.C., came up with a number of methods for universe-shifting that we found more "realistic" and comfortable. Group travel became more consistent in our campaigns, and it's not as hard to get to Mars, Titan, Oz, Gamma World, Shem, Xenex, or Parthor from Middle Earth as it used to be. These universe-shifting devices include:

1. Cross-universal caves: These are great because they fit right into the local geography, and adventures can be set up for the party on the way to the cave to keep the players on their toes. Just go in one entrance and you exit in the new universe.

These caves are usually assumed to have been created either by "natural" forces or by arch-mages or gods. They are open all the time, but are nearly always well hidden, to prevent excessive cross-universe "contamination." It is possible to find the location of a cave, however, by the large number of unusual creatures in the general area of the cave which have found their way through to the players' universe.

2. Teleport chains: This developed from an idea given in one of the "Monty Haul" stories published in an old issue of DRAGON™ magazine. The group finds a length of chain, made from an unidentifiable material; when the chain is laid upon the ground around the group and the ends are joined, everyone inside the chain is "popped" into the new universe, with chain. Reconnecting the chain (possibly after a minimum wait of a day or longer) sends everyone back to the original universe.

3. Rings or amulets: The ring may resemble the fabled *Ring of Gaxx*, except that turning the stone to one of its faces and activating the ring sends the wearer and everything within so many feet of the wearer to another plane or world. The ring may serve as a gate to several worlds. The amulet may work in a similar fashion, or may have small buttons or gems to be pressed, individually or in sequence. Note that an *Amulet of the Planes* can shift people from one parallel universe to another, but this item and those like it would be far more valuable than simpler devices connected to only one other universe. Items like these, which are portable and may be used from any location, should have a minimum time delay between uses of the item to prevent impulsive "popping," and give the DM a chance to show the players his/her stuff, so to speak. I'd recom-

mend a delay of one day at rock bottom and up to several weeks maximum.

4. Rooms and corridors at the bottom of a dungeon: This is a variation on (1). Everyone goes through a doorway or down a long hall and is sent to the other world. *Getting* to the transfer point can be as exciting as what goes on after you pass through it, especially if the gateway area is heavily guarded.

5. Cursed scroll: This is self-explanatory; basically a one-way deal, though the players may discover a way home at the DM's option. The major drawback to this device is that when players are sent somewhere against their will, it could be a potential paradise for them but they'll still want to leave and may not want to come back. Players like — and deserve some measure of control over where they go.

6. Angry Wizard with a new spell: This is an arbitrary way of achieving the objective. It usually occurs at the start of an adventure when someone in the party inadvertently bothers some insane old man in black robes, who then throws a ninth-level universe-shifting spell at the party or tricks them into reading a cursed scroll. How the players get home again is up to the DM, as in (5). As a "DM Special," this suffers from the same problem as (5), unless everyone had expressed some interest in visiting a different plane to begin with.

7. Wish: A few words, properly put, and everybody shows up in Hyborea. Unless the wording is carefully done, however, you could end up hanging from a tree limb, 100 feet off the ground (as we did once). You're *there*, but . . . DM's love this sort of thing, as one of our paladins found out when he popped into the second floor of a women's boarding house on another plane. He was in a *safe place*, just as he had wished for, though he suffered considerable mental duress and was nearly arrested as a peeping Tom.

8. Magical items causing etherealness: Ethereal plate, *Oil of Etherealness*, and the like may allow a shift to a parallel world, since all parallel worlds are said to co-exist on the prime material plane, and any of them can be reached by traveling through the ether.

9. Psionic probability travel: Passage space may be a bit limited, and there's the risk of attracting thought eaters, but this method will work nonetheless. Not many people are going to have this power, though. Psionic etherealness will work, too, but for the user only.

10. Magical spells: Clerics can use the *Astral Spell* or *Plane Shift* to go universe-hopping, though there are limitations here, too. Theoretically, a *Word of Recall* could send the cleric between universes; check with your Dungeon Master. Mages have the *Astral Spell*, too, and may come up with other spells of high level that would serve equally as well.

11. Mutational "planar travel": Creatures such as GAMMA WORLD™ mutants may be capable of this activity. It is also possible for an AD&D character to catch a dose of radiation and develop this particular mutation (among others).

12. An artifact's powers: One of the pretty songs that *Queen Ehlissa's Nightingale* sings may cause a random *plane shift* to send the party elsewhere, with or without bird (artifacts are notoriously untrustworthy). The rings and amulets mentioned in (3) may come under this heading if they connect to a very large number of universes and planes, or possess other special powers. Unless you can control the artifact (DM's laughter in background: Hahaha!) or you don't care *where* you go next, this method is not recommended.

13. Advanced technological devices: Somewhere in the wilderness may lie the ruins of an ancient spaceport, with a teleporter to other alternate universes or planets. The device may be a large booth, a door, a platform, a hollow sphere, etc. It may or may not be in good working order, possibly sending users to an undesired universe.

14. Acts of the gods: This is one way to get a (generally) guaranteed round-trip ticket to another universe. Everyone is asked to perform a task for a greater being in that other universe, and is sent there through the being's own powers. How well the task is completed may determine whether or not the group is returned. One group I was with made a foray into Jotunheim (the Norse giantland) to seek out "the roots of stones." The task was given us by no less a personage than Odin. What we found, after a long search, was a small pile of stones in the back of a cave. Each one had a permanent *Magic Mouth* on it, and would repeat various cheers such as "G-R-A-N-I-T-E. Granite! Granite! ALLLLLLLLL THE WAY! HEY!"

"Rooting stones, get it?" said the DM before we chased him into the kitchen and tried to throw him out a third-story window. He escaped.

These are by no means the only possible methods of travel between universes. *Anything* might work. Dorothy tapped a pair of ruby slippers together and went from Oz to Kansas. Remember how she got to Oz to begin with? In *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*, the children entered Narnia through the back of a coat closet.

In any event, how you get characters there is not nearly as crucial to the campaign as what they find when they arrive. A well designed world will repay the playing group with many more hours of enjoyment than it took to create in the first place—and creating it is a lot of fun, too!



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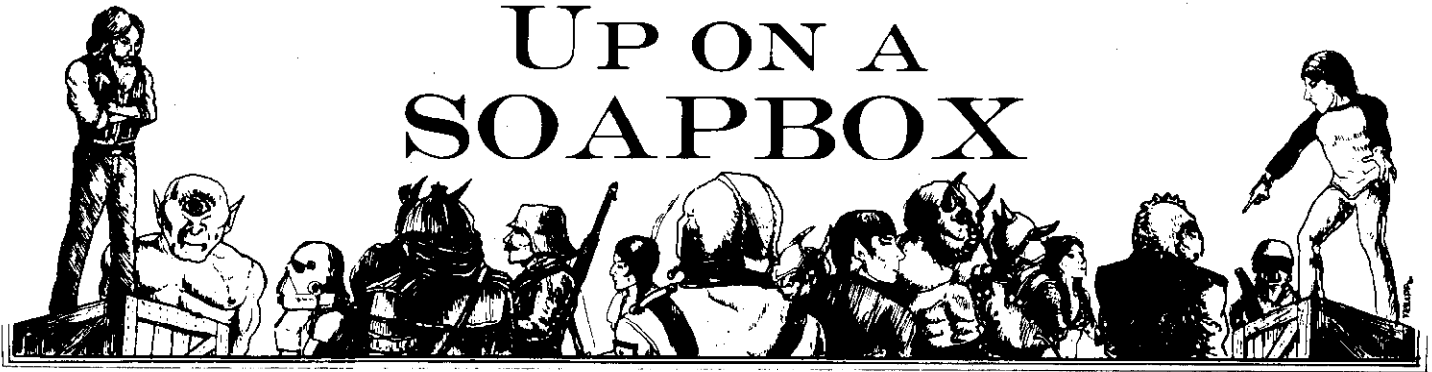
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Adventuring with shaky hands

Where there's a will, there's a way to play

by Judith Sampson

If you've attended large gatherings of D&D® game enthusiasts, you've very likely met at least one handicapped or disabled player. Have you ever wondered how they conquered their limitations and became "just one of the players"?

I'm one such player. Here's what my problems are, and how I overcame them.

I have choreo-athetoid cerebral palsy, which sounds like the name of a creature from the AD&D™ Monster Manual. This means the motor control centers in my brain don't work properly. My body is gripped by writhing, dancing motions that interfere with my sense of balance, the use of my hands, and my reflexes. I can't drive a car, walking is a dangerous chore, and everyday life is a constant battle against a balky body. But I've achieved enough independence to maintain my own apartment, and I work part-time as an English composition coach at the University of Arizona, from which I have bachelor's and master's degrees in creative writing.

I wanted to play in a D&D adventure as soon as I heard about the game from players in the Society For Creative Anachronism, of which I am an active member. It took a long time to get a toe-hold in a game, though, primarily because I can't just hop in a car and drive to someone's home when that person says, "We're playing tonight, wanna come?"

One of my fellow SCA members, Kurt, rolled up my first D&D character at my request one afternoon during a long break between classes at the University of Arizona. I carried the statistics card on this character for over a year before any opportunity arose to actually play her.

Later I learned that the university had a Strategic Games Club which meets every Tuesday night. Although I attended several meetings, I never felt welcome there. Playing the D&D game turned out to be a passing fad for this club, and I

searched again for several more months and years without finding a group of genuinely friendly players and DMs.

At last, I met Joubert, an ex-Navy frogman, a pre-law student, a genial man with whom I shared a keen interest in science fiction, fantasy literature, and playing the D&D game. Week after week, while we ate our lunches or waited for classes, he regaled me with tales of his exploits as a D&D player, past and present. I told him one day, "If you ever set up your own campaign, I want a spot in it!"

About six weeks later, Joubert announced his dungeon was ready. Not only did he invite me, he arranged transportation to wherever his games were held. During those early games, I developed the methods of play and ways of bringing equipment I've used since.

I always tell a DM and other players my problem, and ask for the aid of their more nimble, willing fingers to write down the data and monetary information, hit points, or experience point changes on the score sheets. I also have other players move my character's miniature figure as needed, and if I must convey a secret message to the DM, I don't try to write it down; I go to him and whisper in his ear.

Like most other D&D players I've met, I feel better tossing dice in my bare hands—but when I do, the dice land anywhere but on the game table, which can invalidate a roll. I have found it best to handle one die at a time, tossed from a cup into a deep container used to catch the die as it falls.

Over the almost three years I have played in Joubert's campaign, I have accumulated a capacious canvas bag full of D&D and AD&D books, other game manuals, miniatures (some of these painted for me by player-friends) in a storage box, five different dice, a dice cup, a dice-catching box, and the record sheets for my characters.

After my player characters' statistics are finalized and recorded, I type up the

record sheets myself, photocopy them on legal-size paper, and store them in my canvas bag.

I have tried playing games by computer, but all the terminals I have played on have very sensitive keys, and when I strike them, I have no control over the heaviness or lightness of my touch. Hence, a computer usually beeps or screams at me instead of showing game data. To play successfully I must tell a comrade at the console which keys I wish to be punched.

Aside from playing in Joubert's campaign "by hand," I also play in a D&D game by mail. For me this is ideal; every 10 days or so the DM, Clif, informs me of what's happening to my character in his dungeon, and I respond what I hope is the proper action (usually I am able to write to him promptly). I need to roll no dice, I have no paraphernalia to carry; it's just me, my typewriter, and letter paper. The DM does all the rest!

But there is one problem, and it's a major one. Not everyone in the play-by-mail game has my compulsion to answer Clif as swiftly as possible, and sometimes Clif's other duties interfere with his promptness in sending new data. This makes for a long, drawn-out playing time for each adventure, and much attrition of players who lose interest or no longer have the time to commit.

The D&D and AD&D games are attractive to handicapped or disabled players for the same reasons that other people enjoy them. But to someone like me, hampered by hands and body that refuse to be reliable, running a fearless fighter, a nimble thief, a graceful elf, or a powerful paladin offers the opportunity to be resourceful and quick on one's feet for a while, which never happens in my all-too-mundane real world. Free, agile, and daring in spirit I play, but I can never forget that when the game's done, I face a much greater adversary than any a DM can dream up: my balky body.

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The Bogatyrs of old Kiev

by David Nalle

Vladimir I, Prince of Kiev from 980 to 1015, brought Christianity and civilization to the tribes of the Rus. In the years following his reign, a group of oral stories called Byliny grew up about the Prince and the heroes he drew to his court during this "Golden Age" of old Russia.

At the height of his reign Vladimir had gathered to him a "Druzhina" of 29 superhuman Bogatyr warriors. In addition, each of these Bogatyrs had a Druzhina of 29 heroes as his retinue. These "junior Bogatyrs" were called Druzhiniks, and brought to 870 the total number of heroes at the Prince's command.

During this period the Bogatyrs led the armies of Kiev against a series of invading steppe-nomad tribes led by the semi-demonic Tugarin Zmeevich. In addition, each Bogatyr fought a variety of monsters which lurked in medieval Russia. Bogatyrs led the army in battle together, but in combat with a single monster it was their practice to engage them one at a time, preserving the glory of victory for a single Bogatyr.

Described below are the Prince Vladimir, the eight major Bogatyrs, their foes, and associated inhabitants of Russia at the time. Characteristics for a typical Bogatyr and Druzhinik are also given.

PRINCE VLADIMIR I, THE SAINT

AC: 4
MOVE: 12"
HP: 85
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Nil*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Nil*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
SIZE: *M (5½')*
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful good*
FIGHTER: *13th level*
S:17 I:18 W:20 D:15 C:18 Ch:24

Vladimir is the Prince of all Kievan Rus, from the sea of Azov to Smolensk. He is theoretically the supreme ruler over the principalities of Moscow and Novgorod as well. He is a fair-minded ruler, and of great judgemental ability. His wife is the lovely Princess Apraksiya. All of the Bogatyrs owe their loyalty to Vladimir above all others.

He inherits the martial generalship of his ancestor Rurik, and augments it with great wisdom and Christianlike charity. He is renowned for his fairness as a judge.

He wears +5 chainmail, and has a +3/+4 broadsword as his chosen weapon. He will always be at the forefront in a fight, surrounded by his Bogatyrs and their Druzhiniks.

ILYA MUROMETS

AC: 4
MOVE: 15"
HP: 225
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Nil*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Nil*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
SIZE: *M (6½')*
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful good*
FIGHTER: *20th level*
S:22 I:15 W:15 D:15 C:18 Ch:18

Ilya is a Cossack with long blond hair. He rides a great horse named Burushka-Kosmatushka. He was born paralyzed, and remained that way until age 30. He is of peasant stock, from the village of Karacharova. He has three weapons (which he forged for himself) plus three arrows. His bow is a +4 weapon and can only be drawn by a character with strength of 20 or more. From it he fires his three arrows, each of which weighs 32 pounds. These arrows cannot be fired from a lesser bow, and from his bow they will hit for 3-36 points of damage each. His spear is +3/+5, and hits for 2-16 damage when

used as a thrusting weapon. His mace cannot be lifted by a normal (mortal) man, and does 2-20 points damage when it hits. He leads Bogatyrs in battle.

DOBRYNYA NIKITCH

AC: 4
MOVE: 18"
HP: 150
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Nil*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Nil*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
SIZE: *M (6')*
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful good*
FIGHTER: *18th level*
BARD: *15th level*
S:18 I:18 W:17 D:20 C:15 Ch:18

Dobrynya, second in command of the Bogatyrs, is Ilya's good friend. Kind and soft-spoken until provoked, he plays chess better than any man in Kiev, swims well and is well educated. An excellent player of the gusli, a zither-like instrument, he can charm with his playing.

He fights as a normal swordsman with a normal sword in melee, but is an exceptionally skilled archer. He pulls a heavy bow with great accuracy; his arrows are +5 to hit. He does 1-12 points of damage rather than 1-6 with an arrow, and fires at double normal speed. Dobrynya is the son of a slave Vladimir freed.

ALYOSHA POPOVICH

AC: 3
Move: 15"
HP: 200
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Nil*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Nil*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
SIZE: *M (6')*
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral good*
FIGHTER: *18th level*
S:17 I:17 W:19 D:18 C:16 CH:15

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Alyosha is the third in command of the Bogatyrs. He is shrewd and cunning, and renowned for his utter fearlessness. He is the son of a priest from Rostov. He fights with a +5 bow, or with a +5 whip. He has a tendency to be argumentative.

VOL'GA VSELAIVICH

AC: 6
MOVE: 18"
HP: 250
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Nil*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Nil*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 25%
SIZE: *M (7')*
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful good*
FIGHTER: *18th level*
S:25 I:20 W:15 D:16 C:15 CH:15

Vol'ga destroyed his cradle at birth and marched right out to start killing monsters. By the age of 5 he could read and write, and he was fully grown at age 6. He wields a special club which weighs 3,200 pounds. This club cannot be lifted by another being, and does 3-60 (3d20) points of damage in his hands.

He has the magical ability to change shape at will into a grey wolf, a stag, or a falcon, and can remain in his non-human form as long as he wishes. His great strength is magical in nature, and if he is not in contact with the earth it is lowered by 5 points.

MIKULA SCLYANINOVICH

AC: 6
MOVE: 18"
HP: 250
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2 *fists*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-16/2-16
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Nil*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Nil*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
SIZE: *M (7')*
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral good*
FIGHTER: *15th level*
S:24 I:16 W:14 D:15 C:25 CH:17

Mikula is Vol'ga's greatest friend. He is a great plowman, of unending stamina and great strength. Both of these abilities are of magical nature, and his strength and constitution are each lowered by 3 if he is not in contact with the earth. He has curly blond hair, dresses as a peasant, and attacks with bare fists.

SVYTOGOR

AC: 6
MOVE: 22"
HP: 225
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Touch crumbles organic material to dust*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Nil*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 75%
SIZE: *L (10')*
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*
FIGHTER: *17th level*
S:25 I:14 W:13 D:13 C:18 CH:14

Svytogor is a black-haired giant from the mountains. He is the least reliable of the Bogatyrs, but he is a mighty warrior. His strength is of such a nature that it will reduce to dust any inanimate, organic material, even if he is not trying to do so. He has a +5 sword which cannot be lifted by anyone but himself. It is made out of mountain stone, and does 2-24 points of damage when it hits.

SOLOVEI BUDINIROVICH

AC: 6
MOVE: 12"
HP: 125
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Nil*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Nil*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 50%
SIZE: *M (6')*
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral good*
FIGHTER: *12th level*
ILLUSIONIST: *12th level*
S:17 I:20 W:17 D:18 C:16 CH:17

Solovei masters the naval forces of Kiev. He has a great longboat with the figurehead of a bison. He is also very learned, and is the architect and city planner of Kiev.

Solovei fights with a cutlass-like sword, having a single cutting edge. This weapon is +2 to hit and +4 to damage. He prefers to avoid combat whenever possible, however.



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There are a variety of men and monsters in the legends of the Kievan period. The most notable are described below. Bogatyrs generally prefer to capture and convert a foe rather than slay him outright. Bogatyrs traditionally will bring their captives to Vladimir so that they may pay homage to the prince, at which point (in the legends) the monster usually causes a ruckus all over again and has to be dispatched anyway. Legend often portrays Kievan monsters as nice guys in their own odd way.

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TUGARIN ZMEEVICH

AC: 2
 MOVE: 18"
 HP: 200
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon*
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Breathes fire*
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Immune to fire*
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: 50%
 SIZE: L(10')
 ALIGNMENT: *Neutral evil*
 FIGHTER: 17th level
 MAGIC—USER: 10th level
 S:20 I:16 W:16 D:17 C:17 CH:16

Tugarin is the leader of the Khan's forces against Kiev. He is the son of a human mother and a dragon father. He is immune to fire and can use a breath weapon of fire for 3-24 points of damage once every three rounds. He also fights with a +3/+5 scimitar which does 2-12 damage.

Tugarin's winged horse can fly at a rate of 48", can breathe fire for 1-20 points of damage once every 5 rounds, and has the same alignment as its master. In all other respects, it is identical to a Bogatyr steed.

DRAGON GORYNICH

AC: -2
 MOVE: 18"/48"
 HP: 300
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 7 *claws*, 3 *bites*
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: *Claws* 2-16,
 bites 1-12
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Breathe fire from all heads for 2-16 each*
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Nil*
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: 50%
 SIZE: L (30')
 ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic evil*
 FIGHTER: 15th level
 MAGIC—USER: 7th level

Gorynich is a fearsome and ancient lizard who lives in the mountains to the west of Kiev. He has three heads and seven clawed appendages. He has a snake-like body and likes to eat people. Gorynich is very intelligent (capable of speech) and highly devious, and he hates Vladimir.

PRINCE VESLAV OF POLOTSK

AC: -4
 MOVE: 48"
 HP: 200
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 3
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon*
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Nil*
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Can only be hit by magical weapons*
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%
 SIZE: M (5½')
 ALIGNMENT: *Neutral evil*
 FIGHTER: 13th level
 MAGIC—USER: 15th level
 ILLUSIONIST: 15th level
 S:17 I:18 W:16 D:26 C:16 Ch:17

Veslav is the ruler of a small realm to the north of Kiev, and is also a renowned

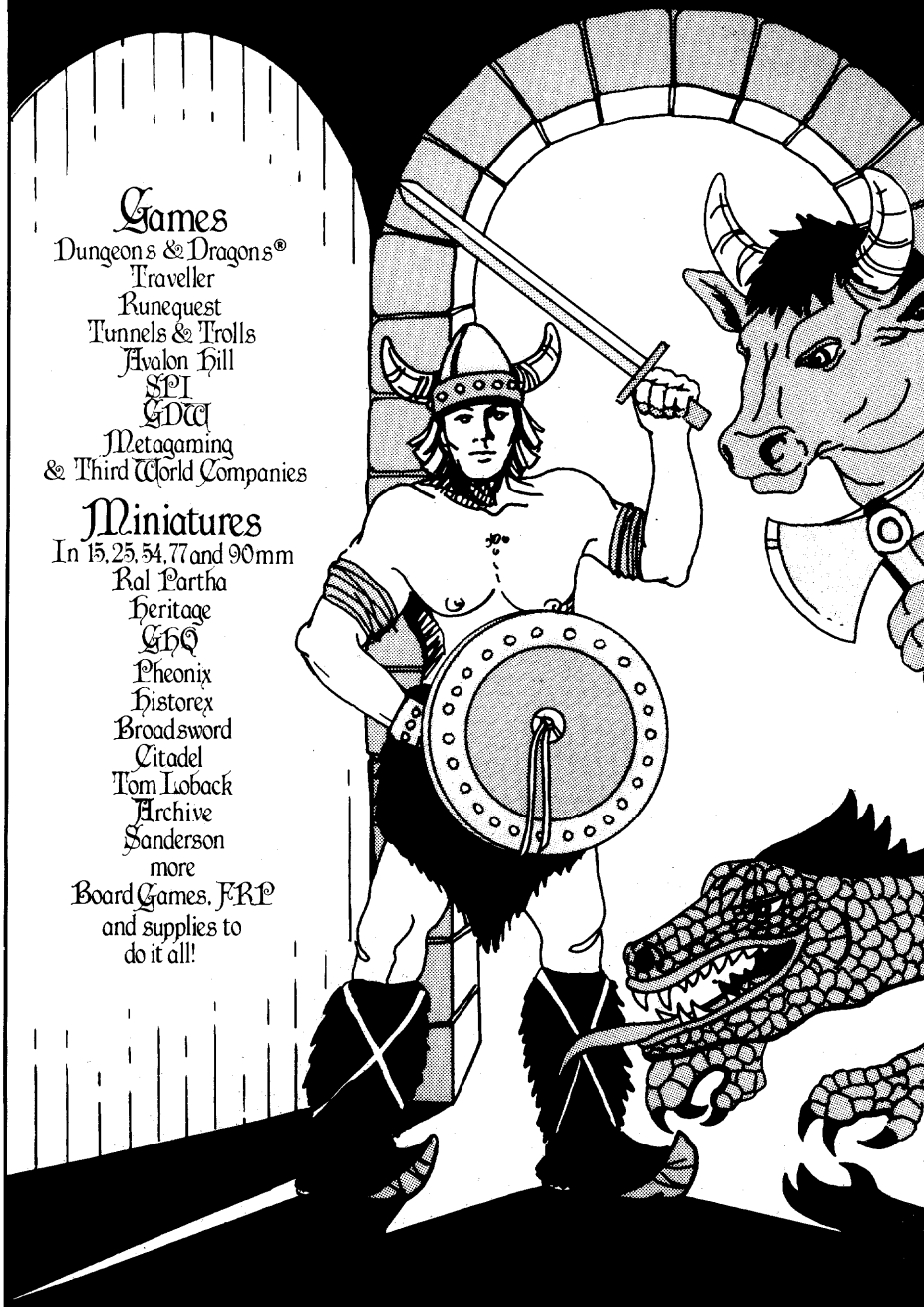
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sorcerer. He is quite jealous of Vladimir. In addition to the usual magic available to characters of his level, he can create at will a large area of blue mist which completely obscures vision, and he has the ability to assume the shape of a wolf at will. He moves at incredible speed (thus the 3 attacks per round with a single weapon), and can teleport up to 100 miles at will with no chance of error. He has a magical golden lance which causes any non-magical armor or other metal it touches to become as brittle as paper (AC 10) for 3 rounds thereafter.

SOLOVEI RAZBOINIK

AC: 5
MOVE: 18"
HP: 175
NO. OF ATTACKS: 3 bites or 1 weapon
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-6/1-12/2-16
or by weapon
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Breathe scalding steam; spell powers*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 25%
SIZE: M (7')
ALIGNMENT: Neutral evil
FIGHTER: 15th level
THIEF: 12th level
S:19 I:14 W:10 D:14 C:15 Ch:8

Solovei is a thief who dwells in the Brynsk Forest. He hides perched in the trees and leaps upon his victims.

He appears as a man with three heads — a nightingale (1-6 damage), a lion (1-

12), and a dragon (2-16). Each head has a different magical power. The song of the nightingale acts as a charm spell; the roar of the lion acts as a fear spell, causing those hearing it to flee; and the hiss of the dragon paralyzes those who hear it with fright for 2-5 rounds.

Solovei is quite clever and observant. He has three daughters of physical strength equal to his who live in the forest with him.

BABA YAGA

AC: 7
MOVE: 24"
HP: 150
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2 claws, 1 bite
DAMAGE/ATTACK: Claw 2-16, bite 1-10
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Poison claws*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Only hit by magic weapons*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 80%
SIZE: M (8')
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic evil
FIGHTER: 12th level
MAGIC-USER: 20th level
ILLUSIONIST: 15th level
DRUID: 10th level
S:22 I:24 W:17 D:16 C:18 Ch:2

Baba Yaga is the best known peril of old Russia. She is a dreadful ogre-witch who dwells in the deepest forest. She is a cannibal, and lives in a house surrounded by skulls. She bakes very fine cakes and breads. She travels about in a giant cauldron which she pushes with her broom.

It skims along the ground at a rate of 48".

If one of her claw attacks hits, the victim must save vs. poison or take an additional 1-12 points of damage beyond the normal 2-16. The sight of Baba Yaga causes fear in other creatures (-3 to saving throw). She can use a charm (-5 to saving throw) on any who gaze into her eyes.

HISTORICAL NOTE

Many of these heroes are based on or resemble actual members of Vladimir's court during the turn of the century between 980 and 1015. This is an excellent period for fantasy role-playing, because it gave rise to so many legends and folk tales.

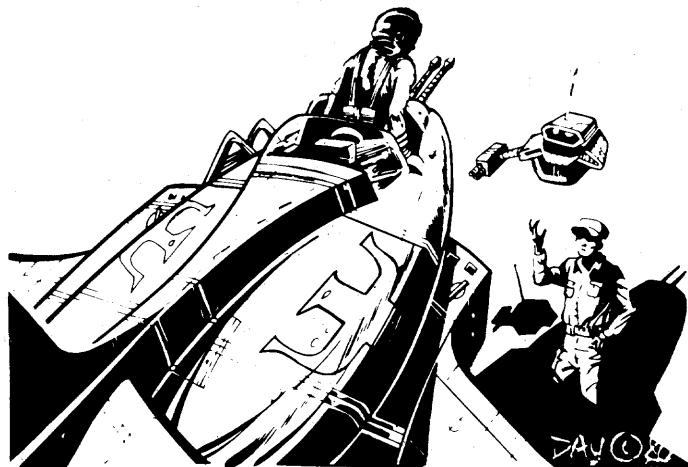
In 1015 the glory of Kiev was tarnished by the division of the Principality between Vladimir's three sons. Yaroslav the Wise, who finally took the throne from his warring brothers, restored unity and strength to the Principality. But by then Kiev had passed from the realm of legend to the realm of history, and the days of the Bogatyrs were over. The power of Kiev faded, and dominion over Russia soon passed to Nijni Novgorod and later to Moscow.

Recommended sources

Russian Folk Tales, Aleksandr Nikolaevich Afanaser, Trans. N. Duddington
Byliny, Tales of Old Russia, Alexander Pronin

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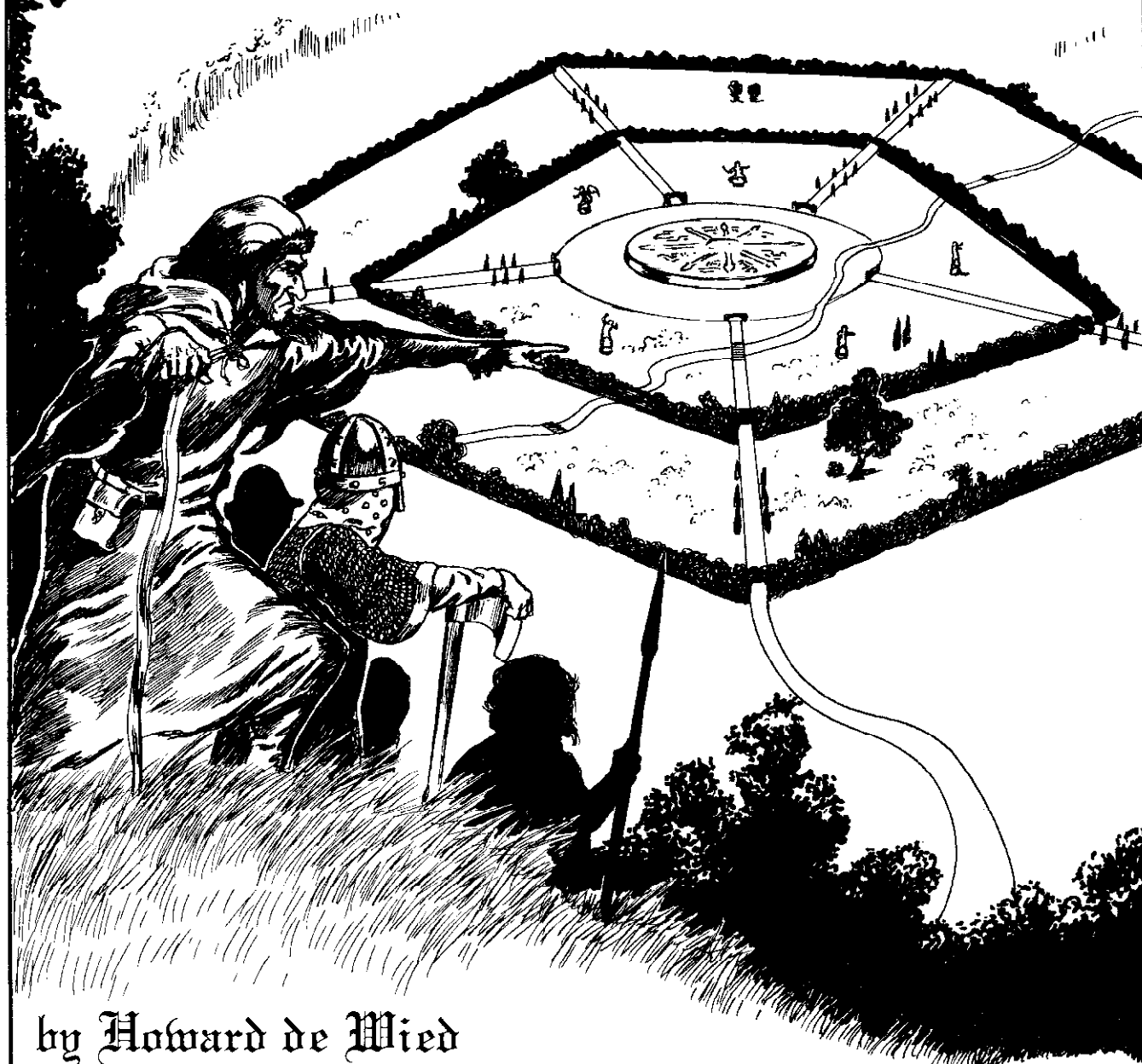
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The Garden of Nefaron



by Howard de Wied

Advanced Division

FIRST PLACE

IDDC II

The Garden of Nefaron

INTRODUCTION

The Garden of Nefaron is designed for use with the rules of the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game. Dungeon Masters should be thoroughly familiar with the material before introducing players to it.

The module is quite hard in two senses. First, it requires player characters of relatively high level; 6 to 8 characters, each of 7th-10th level, are recommended. A suitable mixture of player characters would include one cleric, two magic-users, two or three fighters and one or two thieves.

Second, the players themselves should be experienced. Players with little experience who enjoy challenges may find this module particularly to their liking, but it can also be extremely frustrating for relative newcomers to the game.

As Dungeon Masters will soon discern when reading through this description, it has been designed so that only evil-aligned characters or evil-tending neutrals will really be able to proceed through the entire dungeon without compromising their alignments. Any good characters proceeding past Room 7 are liable to be in serious alignment trouble.

History of the Garden

About 1,000 years ago, the lands north of the river Fortuna, which were mostly ruled by men, were in a state of great turmoil. The land was divided into a score of warring kingdoms, each seeking to rule all others. Of these kingdoms, those of Timbor, Crillos, Faxton and Malakon were the most powerful. *But the army of Malakon, named after its ruler, was fanatical and pressed the kingdoms of Timbor, Crillos and Faxton extremely hard. Indeed, Malek was near to victory. In order to save themselves, the kingdoms of Timbor, Crillos and Faxton united their forces against Malakon. Their combined power was enough to beat Malakon's armies back to the very gate of their capital. However, when the allied forces reached the capital, they found it flying a flag of surrender.*

The leaders of the alliance accepted the surrender gracefully, but were distressed to find that Malakon himself and his four closest followers had fled the city. They learned that Malek had fled to the southernmost part of his kingdom, at the edge of the Great Forest, where he was said to have a stronghold.

Now the leaders of the alliance knew Malakon well. That is to say, they knew that if he was left alone he would raise another army and perhaps form alli-

ances against them. So they picked five warriors from the ranking families of their nations to search out and either kill or capture Malakon.

These five champions journeyed to the Great Forest in search of Malakon. For a long time they could find no trace of him or his cohorts. At last they decided to use their psionic powers to locate Malek. They combined their psionic abilities through the use of a psychogem, which the rulers of the alliance had entrusted to them in case the use of psionics became necessary. They sought to locate their quarry by detecting the power of his psionic mind through the psychogem. *But Malakon, highly superior to any single one of his foes in the use of psionics, felt the power of their detection and launched an attack against the intruders, amplifying it through the use of his own psychogem.* The champions were almost taken by surprise, but they managed to muster their defenses and deflect the attack. Valorio, leader of the alliance of champions, realized that the battle would end in statemate if it continued in this fashion. Thinking that if might could not prevail, perhaps cunning would, he called to his compatriots to ease the attack and to defend only. Then he told them his plan.

In essence, the plan was simple. Instead of trying to force their energies against Malakon's psychogem in an attempt to weaken its powers of enhancement, they would use a different sort of psionic power to draw Malakon's life force into his psychogem, thus trapping him inside it, even if they were not able to destroy him.

Abruptly they put their plan into action — and the luck of the good was with them, for it succeeded. But they were far away from where Malakon and his psychogem were located, and they feared that unless they got there quickly and finished the job, Malakon might escape his imprisonment. So, summoning up the last vestiges of their psionic power, they teleported to the spot.

When the champions set out on their journey, they brought along a special box to contain Malakon's psychogem, should they succeed in obtaining it. The box was designed to prevent penetration by psionic energy, from without or within, and could not be opened by a force from the inside — magical, psionic, or otherwise. The allies quickly placed Malakon's gem in the box, shut it and locked it.

But now what to do with the box itself? This posed a difficult problem. If the box

was ever opened, Malakon's consciousness, which they assumed would have recovered from the shock of being transferred into the gem, would certainly attack them, and who knows what extra power Malakon's mind might derive from actually being inside a psychogem?

Finally, they decided the safest course of action was to use Malakon's own stronghold to contain the box, being sure to guard it with all the means at their disposal. To this end, they constructed various guardians and cast powerful spells and forged traps to prevent access to the chamber where Malakon was imprisoned.

When they were finished, they left that place and returned to Malakon's former capital city in triumph. *When the lords of the alliance heard what they had done they approved, but decided further precautions were necessary.*

They elected to send one lord and his family to live on the edge of the forest as an additional guard, and chose the honored warrior and scholar Merithus as the first sentinel.

Then, since they knew that mortal flesh — no matter how honorable — was weak, they sought the services of a member of the race of ki-rin. The lords explained the nature of the great evil which Malakon represented, and asked if the ki-rin would help. After much deliberation, the rulers of that noble race agreed to perform certain tasks. At midnight on the last day of each week from then on, a ki-rin would visit the place to check all the traps and guardians, making sure that all remained secure. If Malakon was missing, the ki-rin would inform the lords of the land; if any of the protective spells had been countered, the ki-rin would repair them as well as possible.

And so Merithus, Master of Mists, went to dwell by the forest, and for many years he prospered. A great castle was built, but at first few people wished to live so close to the forest. All was quiet until one day a wandering seer visited Merithus and claimed he had seen in a vision that in later times Merithus' home would be destroyed and all those living there would be killed. To keep his family from falling victim to this horrible prediction, Merithus constructed a garden in the shape of a pentagon — a universally recognized symbol for danger and evil among his countrymen — to warn people that great peril lurked nearby.

For 200 more years the house of Merithus lived in relative peace and a town, which was given the name Nefaron by

the descendant of Merithus who presently served as the sentinel, grew up under the protection of the fortress's troops. The story of Malakon was passed from father to eldest son *for seven generations*, and no great evil was visited upon the house of Merithus or the town of Nefaron. But finally the seer's prophesy came to pass; catmen attacked and destroyed both castle and town. None of the house of Merithus remained alive, but survivors of the town of Nefaron rebuilt their homes, and Nefaron is once again prosperous.

Notes for the Dungeon Master: The above account should not be read to the players in its entirety; it gives away far too much information. Most of the history is for the benefit of the DM only, so that he can develop a "feel" for the background of the action that is about to take place.

Certain portions of the text have been printed in italic type. The premise is that the adventurers have found an old scroll, much of which has been ruined by water and time. Only small sections of it (the italicized parts) — sometimes mere phrases — are readable. All passages in italic type may be read to the players, or the DM might choose to reveal only a portion of the "legal" information. Let the party make of it what they will.

A good player will be able to glean a fair amount of useful information from the remains of the scroll. Not least, it tells him the name of the town and its general location. The name Nefaron might perhaps be recognized as having something to do with the word "nefarious," meaning "flagrantly wicked." Also, from the obvious age of the place, it can be deduced that there will likely be few "monsters" in whatever "dungeon" environment might be encountered. The Garden of Nefaron, being a rather distinctive feature of the local geography, would seem like a good place to start searching for the stronghold. Characters having access to the talents of sages or Legend Lore spells or the like will be unable to determine anything further, other than the facts that a town of the correct name in the general area still exists, that it is quite famous for its beautiful garden, and that there is a "feeling" of strong evil about the place.

Wilderness map details

The Town of Nefaron is situated on one of the country's major caravan routes. The cities of Templor, Fortuna and Biscandy are on a three-way trade route. Caravans pass through Nefaron about once every two weeks, mostly from one or the other of these cities, but sometimes from more distant ones. The town is located at a vertex where a small patch of terrain is the only passage between a thick forest and impassable (for caravans) marshes.



The Neverending Marshes is a huge area of waterways, lakes and marshes, sparsely inhabited by humans, but with large populations of troglodytes and lizardmen, as well as the usual orcs, goblins, hobgoblins, and so forth.

The Great Forest, located to the east and northeast of Nefaron, is almost completely uninhabited by humans, and men seldom visit it. It is home to all sorts of nasty creatures, especially spiders, snakes and wolves. Large bands of marauding bugbears and ogres occasionally appear from the forest, so it is thought that those races may live there, too.

GUARDIANS

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: 3

MOVE: 6"

HIT DICE: *See below*

% IN LAIR: *Nil*

TREASURE TYPE: *Nil*

NO. OF ATTACKS: *See below*

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *None*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

INTELLIGENCE: *See below*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful (good or neutral)*

SIZE: *M*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil (immune to psionic attack)*

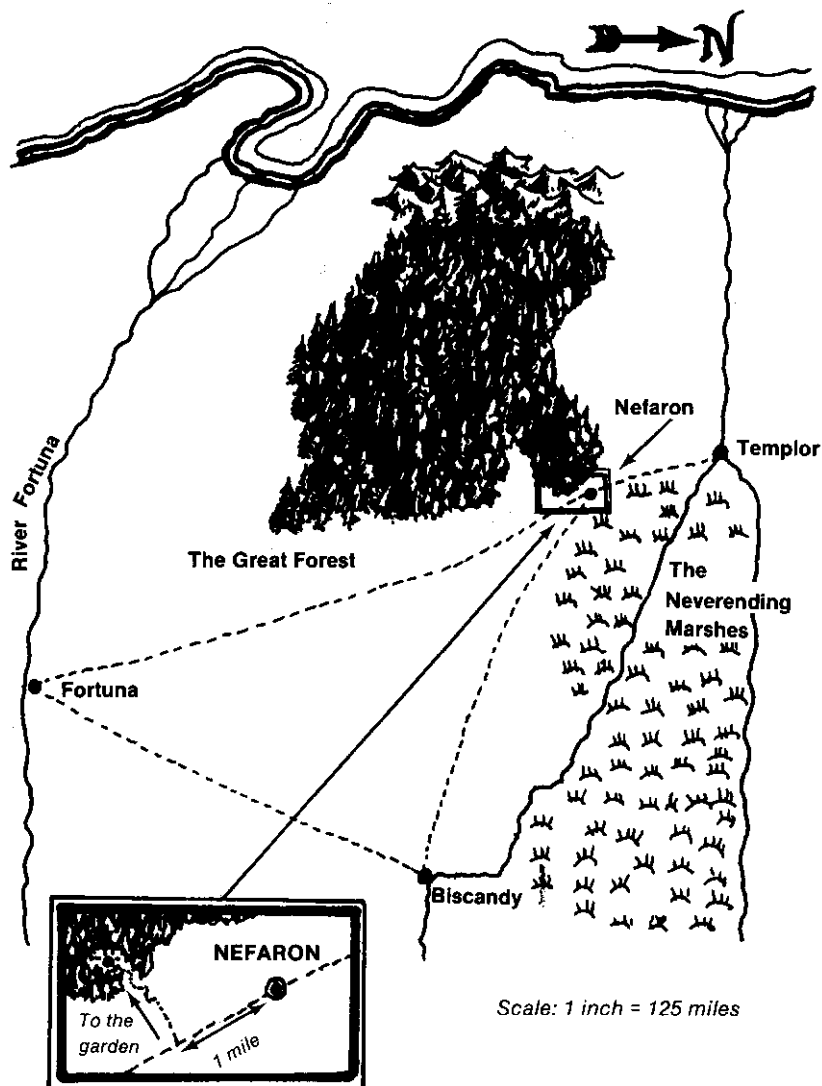
Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil*

Guardians may only be created by magic-users of lawful good or lawful neutral alignment, and the creatures will always assume the intelligence and precise alignment of their creator. (The Guardians found inside the dungeon in this module are lawful good and highly intelligent.)

To create one, a full suit of plate mail (cost 2,000 gp) must first be obtained. While the spell caster is robed in vestments (minimum cost 5,000 gp) appropriate to the alignment of the character, the following spells are cast upon the armor, in this order: *Polymorph Any Object*, *Geas*, *Protection from Evil/Good*, *Strength*, and finally a *Wish*. The Guardian thus created will have an armor class of 3, a move of 6", and strength of 18/00. It will have half as many hit dice as the magic-user who created it, but these will be 10-sided hit dice. It will have the average number of hit points (5.5 per die), rounded up to the nearest whole number.

A Guardian may use only one weapon, which is specified in the wording of the *Wish* spell. It will wield the weapon as a fighter of the same level as its hit dice, having the number of attacks per round appropriate to that level and type of character.

Guardians are able to obey commands and instructions of a quite complicated



nature. (It is possible to construct and sell these creatures for profit.) Initial instructions may be stipulated up to 200 words in length, or any lesser amount of instruction can be programmed into the creature when it is formed. If the 200-word limit has not been reached, additional instructions may be imparted to the Guardian at any time, by anyone of the same alignment as the Guardian, up to the maximum—as long as the phrase “end of instructions” is not included. Once this is spoken to a Guardian, no more instructions will be accepted by that creature. A Guardian will obey its instructions until it is destroyed.

Guardians are not affected by the following spells or spell types: sleep, charm, hold, paralyzation, fear, illusions, death magic, suggestion, maze or any spells which affect human sensory organs. Guardians are unaffected by any psionics or poisons.

They are vulnerable to spells causing physical damage, such as *Fire Ball*, *Cone of Cold*, *Magic Missile*, etc. One spell is especially useful versus Guardians: A *Forget* spell causes a Guardian to ignore

its programmed instructions and stand stationary for the number of rounds that the spell causes a person to forget. A Guardian makes all saving throws as a fighter of the same level (hit dice).

Because of the *Protection from Evil/Good* spell cast upon them, attacks against Guardians are always conducted at -1 to hit, and their saving throws are made at +1.

When a Guardian reaches zero hit points, it is destroyed. The spells binding it are released, leaving only a suit of plate mail and whatever weapon the Guardian was wielding.

Merithus' Mist Maker

The origin of this unusual item is unknown. Perhaps Merithus himself manufactured it, or perhaps he commissioned a talented wizard to do it for him; in any event, there is certainly only one of its kind. Its present whereabouts, in this day and age, are also unknown.

The item looks like a hand-bellows, finely crafted of wood and leather and inlaid with runes of silver. It can produce three magical mists:

Mist of Sleep: This mist cannot be seen; it is transparent. However, some muffling of sound and "thickness" of air where the mist has spread might be noticed. For every round a character is within the mist he must make a saving throw vs. spells. If the save fails, he will instantly fall asleep and will remain in slumber until removed from the mist. If a previous saving throw was successful, a character gains +1 (cumulative) on the next save attempt one round later, up to a maximum of +4. Bonuses are only added following saving throws that succeed, but no bonus previously gained can be lost by failing to make a particular throw. For example, if a character who had earned a +2 bonus on his save against the mist is affected by the mist, and then taken away and revived, he can re-enter the mist and still be able to include the bonus in his later saving throws. Elves' and half-elves' resistance to sleep applies here.

A character will awaken after being away from the mist for 6 turns, or as soon as 1 turn later if he is briskly shaken. The mist is only effective when it is breathed. Characters who hold their breath or have magical means of breathing do not have to save against the mist. DMs should roll saving throws themselves in secret and only inform players of the results.

Mist of Hypnotism: This mist appears to be full of flowing colors: reds, blues, greens, yellows, etc. It has effects similar to the illusionist spell *Hypnotic Pattern*. In each round that a character views the mist, he must make a saving throw vs. spells (wisdom bonus applicable) or be hypnotized (DMs roll in secret). Attempts may be made to shake a character out of the trance; these attempts allow further saving throws at +2 (for the first attempt) and +4 (for the second). But after two such attempts, no further saving throws are allowed, and a victim will fight violently to remain watching the mist. There is a simple way to get a character out of the trance: Simply cover his eyes for one round. A character's range of vision while in the mist is only 20 feet.

Mist of Forgetfulness: This is a thick, green mist with a sweet smell. For every round a character smells the mist, he must make a save vs. poison. Failure to save indicates total loss of memory for 6-60 turns. The character will act as if *Confused* (as per the spell of the same name) and will be unable to use any weapon or spell; victims may only defend themselves with their bare hands. (They have forgotten how to do everything else.) Time spent confused in the mist does not count as part of the 6-60 turns; the duration of forgetfulness begins after the victim leaves the direct influence of the mist. Spell-users will have forgotten all memorized spells when they come out of the trance. The normal range of vision is only 10 feet within the mist.

All three mists have these things in common: They radiate magic strongly. They are permanent in duration, if generated in a confined space. (They will always remain in the space.) If formed outside an enclosed area, they will disperse in 6 turns.

The Mist Maker may be operated once per day, but not more than twice in a week. It will pump 1,000 cubic feet of gas per round, up to a maximum of 50,000 cubic feet per use. If someone attempts to operate the item more than twice in a week or more than once in a day, it will suck into itself everything within a 10-foot radius of itself — including the user — and these things will be forever gone.

To operate the item, the words "Maker of Mists, in the name of Master Merithus pour forth..." must be spoken, followed by the name of whichever mist is desired, and then the bellows must be pumped to expel the mist from inside the maker.

Psychogems

A psychogem appears to be a large, many-faceted gem, usually blue. Psychogems are used to amplify psionic powers, essentially acting as though they donate extra psionic strength points.

Psychogems occur in power "levels" similar to character class levels. Gems of levels 1-9 occur naturally. In olden times, gems of levels as high as 15 were manufactured. For each level of the gem, the psionic ability of the owner/user may be boosted by 10%. Gems may have souls or spirits trapped within them. Gems may be found in unusual places: at the heart of a glacier, deep in a mountain, or at the source of a river.

In order to use a psychogem, a psionic must "key" it to himself — in effect, set up a resonance between the stone and his mind. To key the gem, the character must look into it and discern the geometrical patterns inside the gem created by its facets.

There is a 5% chance per level of the stone that an individual attempting to key a psychogem will have his mind partially trapped inside the stone. This chance decreases by 3% for every time the character has previously keyed a different gem. This chance of being trapped may also be decreased by 5% for each additional person, up to a maximum number equal to the level of the gem, who adds his psionic strength to the individual keying the gem. In such an ar-



rangement, the person to whom the stone is being keyed must have the highest psionic strength of all the individuals involved.

When a gem has been keyed, a small blue flame may be seen inside it.

Should a person's consciousness be trapped in the stone, it can be released by an outside force whenever another character physically touches the gem — causing great pain to the being trapped inside. Touching a gem will always (subject to a saving throw described below) bring a character out of its imprisonment (with his consciousness traveling instantaneously back to his physical body), but it will affect his body like a *Symbol of Pain*, causing 2-20 points of damage. To see if attempts to release him from the stone are successful, the character should roll a saving throw on d20. If the result of the roll is greater than the character's constitution, he is freed. A new attempt (touch) and a new saving throw may be made once per round until it succeeds or until the "toucher" gives up. A character who is released from a gem will be in shock for the same number of hours that he was trapped in rounds. (However, a system shock roll does not need to be made.) During this time, the character can take no action of any sort.

It is possible to "unkey" a gem, rendering it useless to someone who had already keyed it to himself. This action requires the person trying to unkey the gem to bring more psionic strength (current totals applicable, not full-strength totals) to bear on the stone than the person to whom it is keyed. Take the difference between the two totals and roll d%. A roll of the difference or less indicates that the stone has been unkeyed. The psionic to whom the gem is keyed will be automatically aware of the attempt to unkey and will almost certainly resist the attempt. Each round of attempting to unkey a gem requires an expenditure of 10 strength points. Defending against it requires only 5 strength points per round. For a gem to be unkeyed requires that it be in the possession of the character to whom it is keyed.

Because of the severe pain caused to the "inhabitant" by someone else touching the keyed stone, a psionic possessing one will always wear it on his person. Usually it is carried in a soft leather pouch hung around the neck, making access to it easy in case the need arises to use it. When in use by its owner, the gem is held in the hand while the psionic concentrates his power through it. No other action may be taken while doing this.

Psychogems are almost impossible to destroy. Usually, only the environment at the opposite extreme of the place where they were created will be sufficiently powerful to spoil a gem. For instance, being crushed by the depths of

the ocean if the gem came from the heart of a mountain; or being subjected to absolute zero temperature if it was "born" at the heart of a volcano.

The Garden of Nefaron

This beautiful place can be reached by a winding path which runs from the main road a quarter of a mile into the surrounding forest. The garden is surrounded by the forest, but seems very quiet and peaceful in contrast to the ruggedness and threatening mood that the forest conveys to those who travel through it. Its foliage consists mainly of low-lying shrubs and flowers with an occasional tree.

The garden is in the shape of a pentagon with a diameter of roughly 200 feet. The points of the pentagon are connected by lo-foot-wide paths which form the outline of a pentagram (five-pointed star) within the pentagon formed by the shrubbery.

The ground is covered by low-lying flowering bushes, except for a lo-foot-radius circle in the very center. Here a circular stone platform protrudes 1 foot above ground level. Its top surface is marked with the signs of the Zodiac, and it radiates an aura of magic due to a permanent *Levitation* spell cast on it.

In the center of the circle is a secret compartment. It may be discovered by thieves using their "find traps" ability, by dwarves or gnomes on a roll of 1-2 on d10, and by others on a roll of 1 on d10. A circular piece of stone in the center of the larger piece may be lifted out to reveal a circular hole 6" deep and 6" wide.

At the bottom of this hole is a small, mushroom-like projection sticking up. Pushing down on this will cause the stone platforms to begin to descend. Pulling up will cause the mushroom-like projection to come away in the person's hand, but it may be replaced in its socket and will operate the descent mechanism as usual. The platform descends at the rate of about 20 feet per round. It takes two rounds to descend to its greatest possible depth, and the platform will remain 1 foot above the floor when it reaches the end of its descent.

DUNGEON LEVEL 1

General

All parts of the dungeon are made of hewn stone. All floors, unless otherwise noted, are of flagstone. All ceilings are plain hewn stone, also unless otherwise noted, and are 20 feet high.

The ki-rin acting as the dungeon "caretaker" is described below. The DM decides results of ki-rin encounters with adventurers, but if the party is evil or evil-tending neutral, the ki-rin will probably attempt to destroy it. A ki-rin has supra-genius intelligence, and the chance of being able to mislead or confuse it is virtually nil.

Ki-rin

Armor Class: -5

Move: 24"/48"

Hit dice: 12

Hit points: 77

Magic Resistance: 90%

Alignment: Lawful good

Size: L

Spells:

1st level: *Shield, Erase, Burning Hands, Sleep, Magic Missile (x2), Detect Magic, Hold Portal, Protection from Evil.*

2nd level: *Wizard Lock, Web, Stinking Cloud, Ray of Enfeeblement, Mirror Image, Magic Mouth (x2).*

3rd level: *Dispel Magic, Explosive Runes, Fireball, Lightning Bolt, Phantasmal Force, Slow, Suggestion.*

4th level: *Dimension Door, Fear, Fire Trap, Ice Storm, Minor Globe of Invulnerability, Remove Curse.*

5th level: *Bigby's Interposing Hand, Conjure Elemental, Passwall, Teleport, Transmute Rock to Mud.*

6th level: *Disintegrate, Geas, Invisible Stalker, Anti-Magic Shell.*

7th level: *Power Word Stun, Vanish, Monster Summoning V.*

8th level: *Symbol, Maze.*

9th level: *Prismatic Sphere.*

Psionic Ability: 200

Minor disciplines: *Levitation; Invisibility; Detection of Good and Evil; Cell Adjustment, Clairaudience, Clairvoyance.*

Major disciplines: *Mass Domination, Mind Bar, Energy Control, Telekinesis.*

(1) As the elevator platform nears the end of its descent, party members will find themselves in a dark chamber. A small amount of illumination coming through the hole to the surface will enable them to make out a large human figure standing motionless a few feet away from the platform. If characters approach close enough to touch the figure, or if a better source of light is employed by the party, they will discover the figure to be a stone statue. (A *Detect Magic* cast before anyone steps off the platform will register positive, but will not provide any details about the magic it detects.)

The elevator will automatically begin to ascend to surface level 3 rounds after the first party member steps off the platform, possibly carrying some characters back to the surface, unless the mushroom-like projection is removed from its housing while the elevator is in the "down" position. It takes 1 round for the platform to make the ascent, and those on the platform may jump off during the first half of that round without suffering damage. The mushroom-like handle will function normally again once the elevator has returned to the surface.

The statue is located 10' in front of a set of double doors visible along the south wall. It is a statue of a man dressed in a long, flowing cloak with the hint of armor underneath. He has his arms



folded across his chest, and his stern but handsome face is directed straight at the platform. As soon as anyone steps off the platform, the statue will speak the following warning through the *Magic Mouth* spell that has been cast on it: "Beware! Beware! Turn back, lest you unleash the evil that is guarded here."

The concealed door in the southwest corner can be detected without special effort, on a 1-3 on d6 for elves and half-elves, or a 1-2 on d6 for others. It is a one-way door opening out of this room, normal in appearance with a simple lock. It will close behind the party after all members intending to pass through it have done so, and cannot be opened normally from the other side (see [3] below). A *Wand of Secret Door Location* will find this door automatically.

The secret door in the southeast corner of the chamber may be detected only when deliberate searching is done. Elves and half-elves will find it on a roll of 1-2 on d10, others on a roll of 1 on d10, and a wand will find it on a roll of 1-9. The secret door (hinged along the top edge) may be pulled up from the bottom by anyone with a gripping strength of 18 or better; there are depressions cut into the floor below the door for this purpose.

The double doors are plain oak, iron bound, and will open without incident.

In the center of the north wall 5 feet above the floor is a secret compartment similar to the one in the stone platform. Opening it will reveal a similar space inside, except that where the mushroom-like projection is in the elevator compartment, here there is an iron spike driven flush into the wall. (This used to be a "call button" for the elevator, but it no longer operates.)

(2) This corridor is filled with *Mist of Sleep*. A *Dispel Magic* cast at the mist will cause it to cease its function for one round within the area of effect. Should a

character reach the far end of this corridor and succeed in pulling open the false doors there, the floor will fall away around the doorway, revealing a 30-foot-deep pit. All characters within 5 feet of the false doors will fall, taking 3d6 damage, and there is a 25% chance per individual that the fall will cause unconsciousness. There is nothing at the bottom of the pit.

(3) Characters opening the concealed door and entering will see nothing unusual until they turn the second corner of the maze and are facing north. Then they will see that the air is rather misty. This mist is harmless and merely serves to obstruct vision in the maze. By the time point "X" is reached, the range of vision is only five feet, and it will remain at that figure for as long as characters remain in the maze. There is nothing threatening — in fact, nothing at all — in the maze; it only serves as a means of delaying intruders in hopes that they will remain confused until the ki-rin makes its rounds. The door leading to (1) will not open normally from this side. It can be smashed open with blunt weapons or axes (it will absorb 50 points of damage before breaking open) or opened with a *Knock* spell. Due to the poor visibility, it is impossible to accurately map the maze. Infravision will function at its normal range in the mist for purposes of locating other characters in it.

(4) The secret door along the north wall of this passage cannot be seen without careful searching. The chance of finding the door is the same as in (1): elves 1-2, wand 1-9, others 1 on d10. This secret door slides to the east. Anyone with a gripping strength of 18 or better may slide it open; there are depressions along the west edge of the doorway for this purpose. The door leading to (5) is a normal wooden, iron bound enclosure.

(5) This room has a conical, downward-sloping floor, leading to a 20-foot-diameter circular platform at the bottom of the curvature in the center of the chamber. The ceiling is covered with mirrors, making it appear that the ceiling is also conical. As soon as a character stepson the floor in this room, it will start to carry him around the room as if he is in a whirlpool. The floor makes one revolution per round. Jumping onto the moving floor from outside the doorway is possible; characters doing so will land without harm at a percentage chance equal to dexterity x 5%; i.e., a character with 15 dexterity has a 75% chance of landing unhurt, and one with a dexterity of 10 has a 50% chance. Failing to make this roll will result in the character taking 2-8 points of damage from the minor fall. It takes 3 rounds of spinning and falling toward the center for a character to reach the central area. When the first character arrives here, the trap door will open and the character will fall 30 feet, taking 3d6 damage, with a 25% chance of unconsciousness. If a character happens to look at the mirrored ceiling as he falls (25% chance), the ceiling above the pit will act like a *Mirror of Opposition*. A duplicate of the character will appear in the bottom of the pit and battle will be joined.

The same thing will happen to each character who is on the rotating floor, possibly making the pit quite crowded with characters and magical duplicates. Each duplicate will only attack the character it resembles, but may be affected by attacks from other characters who did not look at the ceiling on the way down and thus do not have a duplicate of their own to contend with.

When all of the characters and objects on the spinning floor have been drawn into the pit, the chamber will stop rotating and the trap door will close over the struggle below. The floor will not move



again until the battle is over and the survivors (if any) have escaped from the pit. Weights of less than 50 pounds will not open the trap door from the outside, and it cannot be opened from below except by a *Knock* spell. At the bottom of the pit is the skeleton of a dead fighter in plate mail with a *x1 battle axe* at his side.

(6) There is nothing unusual about this passage.

(7) The iron door leading from (6) to this room is locked with a device of such intricacy that a thief's attempt to pick it is made at -10% to the normal chance. Standing with its back against the door in the southeast corner is a 7½-foot-tall man-shaped figure whose body seems to have been sewn together. This is a flesh golem. (AC 9, MV 8", HD 9, hp 40, #AT 2, D 2-16/2-16. See the AD&D™ Monster Manual for more details.) It is equipped with *Bracers of Defense* AC 2 and has a *Magic Mouth* spell cast on it. As soon as someone steps through the doorway from (6), the flesh golem will say, "You have been warned once. Turn back or I shall be forced to defend this passage for the cause of good."

If anyone steps further toward the golem, it will assume a fighting stance and will charge and attack the first character to come within 10 feet of the south door.

The door on the south wall is also made of iron and is intricately locked, the same as the west door.

(8) There is a 10-foot-square pressure plate concealed in the floor halfway down this corridor. Each character walking past this point has a 50% chance, regardless of his weight, of triggering the trap. (Weights of less than 50 pounds will have no effect.) When it is triggered, a stone block will fall from the ceiling, causing 2-24 points of damage (save vs. petrification for half damage) to the character who set it off. Armor and dexterity bonuses to the saving throw are applicable. The door at the south end of the corridor is wooden and iron bound.

(9) This room is filled with *Mist of Hypnotism*.

(10) The door from (9) is made of iron and is locked normally. A *Symbol of Hopelessness* has been inscribed on it. Opening the door triggers the symbol.

Once it is triggered, a *Magic Mouth* will speak the following: "Turn back! Turn back! Leave and never return to this place!" Wisdom bonuses count for saving throw purposes. The door leading west is wooden and iron bound with an intricate lock like the mechanisms in the doors of (7).

(11) The concealed door at the west end is detectable normally (1-3 on d6 for elves/half-elves, 1-2 for others). However, it has been *Wizard Locked* at 18th level of ability.

(12) There is an illusory wall running north and south through the center of this 50-foot-long chamber. If someone touches the door in disbelief, it will be dispelled. Otherwise, it will appear to be solid and featureless. If someone leans against the wall or pushes on it, that character will fall through it, seeming to disappear from view to the characters on the other side.

(13) through (16) These rooms are all in identical states of disrepair, with only a couple of distinctive features in particular rooms (see below). The rooms are apparently devoid of contents apart from a pile of rubble in the center of each floor which is recognizable as broken and burnt pieces of what was once usable furniture..

(14) A careful search of the pile of furnishings in this room will reveal an undamaged *Carpet of Flying*, large enough to carry 2 people at 36" flying speed. Its command word is "Luck." It appears to be a rug of Oriental design with a pattern of four dragons in blue at the corners facing a green world in the center. The background color is cream with a green border.

(15) A careful search of the wall in this room will reveal (1-2 on d6 for elves/half-elves, 1 on d6 for others) that on the north wall in the west corner there is a secret compartment. It is locked and a *Leomund's Trap* has been cast on it. Inside is a hollow bone cylinder about 1 foot long and 3 inches in diameter. This contains a *Scroll of Protection From Possession*, of the variety that lasts 10-60 rounds. There is also a small leather sack containing 7 gems: a 10 gp turquoise, a 100 gp pearl, a 10 gp azurite, a 1,200 gp emerald, a 500 gp garnet (violet), a 200 gp topaz and a 500 gp amethyst.

(17) The door at the end is made of iron and locked with a complex lock as in (7). A trap is triggered if the lock is picked: Iron bars crash down in front of the door and 10 feet back down the passageway. The walls then start to move together at the rate of 1 foot per round.

Anything remaining between them until the middle of the 5th round thereafter will be crushed.

(18) In this room is a skeleton of a fire giant. (AC 4 [AC 7, with +3 *Ring of Protection*, MV 12", HD 11 x 5, hp 67, #AT 1, D 5-30.) It is immune to *Sleep*, *Charm*, and *Hold* spells, and is unaffected by any attacks using cold or fire. Edged weapons do half damage. *Unholy* water will cause 2-8 points of damage per vial-full that hits. The giant skeleton will surprise opponents on 1-4 on d6 and will attack anything coming through the door. It wields a giant-sized club. For attempts to turn, treat the skeleton as a spectre. Note: Good-aligned clerics cannot affect this creature in any manner with an attempt to turn.

The iron door in the southwest corner of the room has an even more complex lock than the other doors encountered so far; attempts by a thief to pick it are made at -15%.

(19) A *Continual Darkness* spell has been placed here, covering the last 50 feet of the north-south passage and the 10 feet running east-west up to the double doors. Inscribed on these wooden doors is a *Glyph of Warding* which will cause 36 points electrical damage (save for half damage) if passed. The doors also contain a carving of a man with goat hooves and horns covered with shaggy fur from the waist down. But this image has been severely mutilated, apparently by savage hacking with sharp blades.

(20) The main feature of this room is a large black obsidian altar against the east wall, with a five-foot-high, five-foot-wide platform running around the front and sides. The top of the altar is 5 feet above the level of the platform. There are steps leading up to the platform.

In the center of the room is a low bench, also made of obsidian. The floor, walls, and ceiling are all painted black.

It seems that there were once many paintings on the walls and ceiling, done in bright fluorescent colors, mostly of various animals: toads, scorpions, bats, basilisks and others. The image on the ceiling appears to be a painting of a huge black dragon with a skeleton-like rider. All of the paintings have been mostly obscured and defaced by the scribing of many signs and glyphs in white on top of the original paint. In the southwest corner is a pile of burnt wood. In the north-east and southeast corners are small collections of rubble which appear to be the broken and twisted parts of a pair of candelabras. On the altar are two small crystal vials and a small metallic box.

This room is a shrine, constructed by Malakon as a tribute to his evil god. The paintings were defaced by the champions who imprisoned Malakon. The

shrine is now useless as a place of worship. The glyphs and signs which mar the paintings are blessings of good and signs of warding of evil, designed to keep prayer here from reaching its desired destination.

Although much of its evilness has been neutralized by the signs scribed in white, the shrine is not without power. If any good or neutral character touches the altar, the toucher will receive 3-30 (if good) or 3-18 (if neutral) points of damage. *Cure* spells will not heal this damage; lost hit points can only be regained by rest and time. Evil characters will not take damage from touching the altar, but there is a 2% chance per level for any character touching the altar to unintentionally summon a Type II demon. (AC -2, MV 6"/12", HD 9, hp 49, #AT 3, D 1-3/1-3/4-16; see *Monster Manual* for more details.)

The pile of burnt wood in the southwest corner was once a font. The basin, made of electrum and worth 10,000 gp, is still intact underneath all the ash. It weighs 250 pounds. The broken candelabras were made of lead and are worthless. The two crystal vials are full of unholy water.

The small metallic box is made of steel. It is locked, and has an ordinary stone inside to make it heavy. It is *not* the box in which Malakon's consciousness is imprisoned. The lock may be picked by a thief quite easily.

The secret door in the platform cannot be detected by a *Wand of Secret Door Location*, although it may be seen by *True Sight* or a *Gem of Seeing*. It may be found by elves and half-elves on a roll of 1-3 on d10 or by others on 1-3 on d20. It opens by pulling up, like the door in (1), and also cannot be moved by a gripping strength of less than 18.

(21) Beneath the secret door is a 10-foot-deep tunnel leading straight down with a one-person ladder along the side. A flicker of reddish light may be seen at the other end of the tunnel when a character reaches the bottom of the ladder. There is a 40-foot horizontal tunnel ending at a set of stairs leading 10 feet up. At the far end of the staircase is an illusory wall of fire. Behind that is a door made of lead.

The wall of fire illusion has audible and olfactory components. No character is allowed a saving throw unless he specifically states that he does not believe the wall exists, in which case he gets a saving throw vs. spells as normal, with wisdom bonus applicable. Any character who fails to disbelieve the illusion and passes through it anyway will take 20-30 points of damage (2d6 + 18), or half damage if a save vs. spells is made.

(22) A large table and five chairs are in the center of the room. On the table is

a small metallic box. On either side of the table stand two "men" dressed in full plate mail, carrying halberds. Their faces are hidden by visors. The door on the south wall is also made of lead — in fact, the walls and ceiling of the room as well are covered by a thick plating of lead.

The two "men" in plate mail are *Guardians*. (AC 1, MV 9", HD 9, hp 50 each, #AT 3/2 with +3 to hit, D by weapon with +6 bonus to damage on each hit. See foregoing description for more details.) They have been constructed of +2 plate mail and they wield magical halberds. Due to their magic armor, saving throws vs. spells causing physical damage are made at +2.

The guardians have been instructed to guard the metallic box, letting no one leave the room with it. If someone succeeds in escaping with it, the guardians will pursue them and attempt to return the box to this room.

As noted above, this room is shielded by lead. No detection devices or spells will work here, and psionics cannot penetrate the lead covering. It is impossible to enter or leave this room by going astral or ethereal or out of phase. The secret door on the east wall is of the same nature as the one at the altar.

Within the metallic box is Malakon's psychogem and, within the gem, the consciousness of Malakon himself. The box is made of adamantite lined with lead to prevent Malakon from using his psionic powers to get free. The box itself is worth 2,000 gp without its contents.

Malakon's consciousness possesses the following abilities and characteristics: alignment, chaotic evil; age, venerable; intelligence, 19; wisdom, 18; charisma, 16 (see below); strength, constitution, and dexterity not applicable; hit points not applicable; psionic strength, 142; psionic ability, 284; attack/defense modes A,B,D,E/F,G,I,J; minor disciplines of *Invisibility*, *Domination*, and *ESP*.

Malakon's ESP is much more powerful than the norm. He is able to look deep inside a person's mind, revealing to himself all of the victim's strengths and weaknesses. It takes but one round to do this, and using the ESP power costs 5 strength points per round. One person may be surveyed at a time.

Malakon's Domination is also more powerful than the usual discipline. It is possible for Malakon to completely transfer his mind to another body in a process somewhat similar to a *Magic Jar* spell. However, the victim's soul is destroyed since there is no vessel to contain it. Using this form of Domination successfully costs 70 strength points. Intended victims receive a saving throw vs. death magic, made at -2 (wisdom bonus applicable). If the attempt fails, only 20 psionic strength points are deducted.

Malakon's original physical body was that of a half-elf, and operated as a 17th-

level magic-user/7th-level fighter. He has no spells presently in his memory; they were all disrupted when he was drawn into the gem.

The box is *Wizard Locked* (18th level) and trapped with a *Symbol of Death*. Should someone succeed in opening it, Malakon will immediately begin using the extra-strong version of ESP on each character, starting with the fighters in the party. He will look for the best combination of hit points, strength, constitution and dexterity in a certain individual, and as soon as he made his selection he will use his extra-strong Domination power to transfer his soul to that body. The victim's physical characteristics (appearance, hit points, strength, constitution, dexterity) will stay the same, but Malakon's abilities as described above will take precedence in other cases.

Immediately thereafter he will turn invisible, grab his gem and head down to the second level as fast as possible. Once on the lower level, he will attempt to gather his spell books, magical items, and the sack of gems in his study and leave for distant lands.

Malakon is cunning, greedy and thoroughly evil. If detained or prevented from going alone to the second level, he will use his cunning and persuasiveness to lead the party away from his lair and will himself return later. He will attempt to give the party the slip at the first possible opportunity after transferring his mind to a character's body.

Malakon's psychogem is a 6th-level stone. It has two special powers which have, in fact, already been described. The stone is responsible for the extra-strength ESP and Domination powers which Malakon possesses. Other characters, should they gain hold of the gem, will not be able to use these special powers unless they already have the disciplines of ESP and/or Domination. (Anyone else intending to use it will also have to "unkey" it.) Touching the stone while Malakon is inside it will have no effect on Malakon. Touching the stone when Malakon is outside it will have the usual effect.

(23) This is a false representation of Malakon's quarters. All that is left of it is a pile of burnt wood in the center of the room. There is nothing of value here.

(24) This is another false representation, this time of a magic-user's workroom. In the center of the room is a pentagram inscribed on the floor. Careful measurement would reveal that it has not been scribed correctly. There are many smashed cabinets, tables and shelves around the room and a great deal of broken glass on the floor. Even careful searching will reveal nothing of value.



DUNGEON LEVEL 2

(25) This room appears at first to be entirely empty. Careful searching of the floor is 25% likely to reveal the existence of a barely visible crack, in the shape of a 20-foot-diameter circle, each turn that a 10-foot-square section containing part of the crack is searched.

In addition, there is a secret compartment in the center of the circle, similar to the one in the elevator at the entrance. Also, like the entrance, the circular piece in the floor radiates magic. The secret compartment may be found just as at the entrance and will come away to reveal a same-sized hole. This time, however, there is nothing but another hole in the bottom surface of this hole.

This mechanism, also an elevator, will not operate unless the mushroom-like projection from the entrance elevator is brought here and pushed all the way down into the small hole. When this is done, the elevator will begin to descend at 20 feet per round, taking 4 rounds to reach the bottom of its trip. It will automatically ascend after 3 rounds just like the first elevator, but this does not present a great problem here, because the call button (in the south wall on the lower level of room 25) is operating normally, and can be used to bring the elevator back down to the lower level if needed.

(26) The illusionary wall directly op-

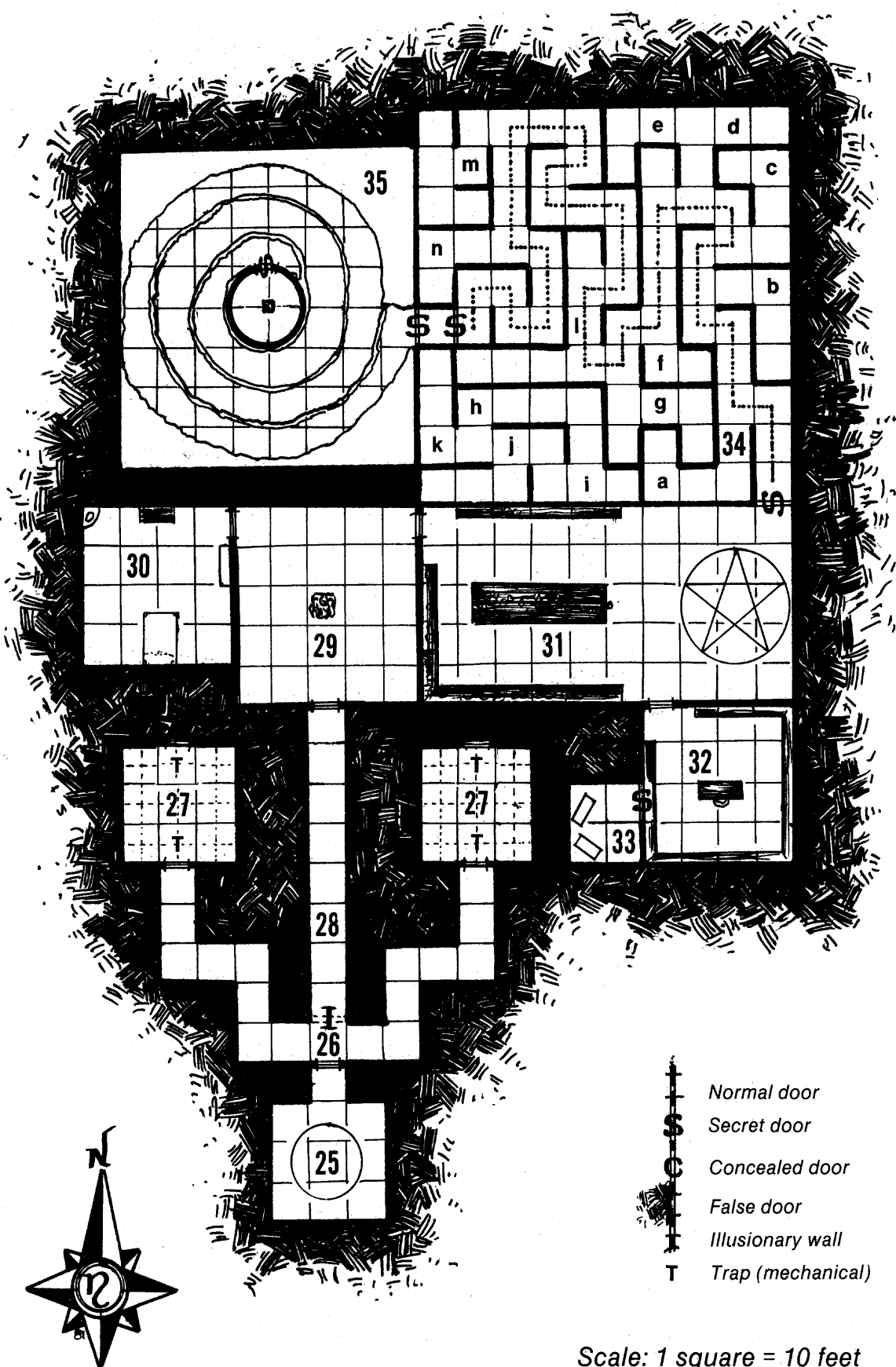
posite the door is as in (12) above. The doors to (27) are wooden, iron bound.

(27) These rooms are traps. The doors opposite the entrances are false. Over each 5-foot-square section of the floor (shown by dotted lines on map) is a spear set in a tube in the ceiling. When one of the 5-by-5-foot squares is pressed upon by any weight of more than 30 pounds, the spear will fire down at the source of the disturbance. Rolls for the spears to hit are made against the character's armor class as if the spear were being wielded by a 5th-level fighter. A shield will have no effect on a character's effective armor class unless the character states that the shield is being held overhead. These spears do 2-5 points of damage each. They are 4 feet long and were once poisoned, but the poison has long since decayed and is harmless.

Should a character reach the false door at the end of either room and open it, a 10-foot-square pit will open beneath him. The pit is 30 feet deep and will cause 3d6 damage to someone who falls in.

(28) There is nothing unusual about this passageway. The door (wooden, iron bound) at the far end is locked with a complex lock (-15% for thieves) and is also *Wizard Locked* (17th level).

(29) In the center of this room is a





grotesque statue. It is an 8-foot-tall humanoid shape with four arms and two legs. The arms end in hands tipped with long claws. The most horrible aspect of this statue-creature is the face. It is oval with a single red eye, and from its mouth protrude long fangs.

This statue is decidedly magical. As soon as anyone besides Malakon steps through the door to this chamber, it will become animate and move to attack. It has AC 0, MV 6", HD 10, hp 56, #AT 5, D 2-12/2-8(x4). Special attack, heat ray; Special defenses, see below; Magic resistance, standard; Alignment, neutral; Size: L (8' tall). The eye is a ruby through which is focused a heat ray which does 4d8 damage (save vs. breath weapons for half damage) to anyone the statue looks at. It will always gaze upon the character closest to it. It can use the heat ray once per round in place of its physical attacks, and can gaze upon a different character every round.

The statue is mindless and cannot be affected by any mind-related spells or psionics. It is not affected by *Sleep*, *Charm*, *Hold* or *Paralysis* spells or attacks, and is immune to poison. It is made of stone, so spells like *Stone to Flesh* and *Rock to Mud* are extremely effective.

The ruby in its forehead is worth 5,000 gp if detached from its socket, but will not retain the heat-ray properties if it is taken out.

(30) This room apparently was once sumptuously furnished. There are many wall hangings. In the center of the south wall is a large four-poster bed. Directly south of the doorway is a large cupboard. On the north wall is a large chest of drawers with a mirror above it. In the northwest corner is a marble washbasin with an urn below it.

The hangings and the covers on the bed are threadbare and colorless. There

is a lot of moth-eaten and useless clothing in the closet and the chest of drawers. The only useful item in the room is the mirror. It measures 4 feet by 3 feet and is a *Mirror of Mental Prowess*.

(31) This is obviously a magic-user's workroom. Cabinets and shelving line the walls. There is a large workbench in the center of the floor toward the western half of the room. On top of this bench is a bewildering assortment of glassware which all seems to be connected. The eastern half of the room is empty except for a pentagram (*correctly*) inscribed on the floor. On the east end of the workbench is a large brazier.

The cabinets and shelving are filled with more glassware and a huge selection of magic-user spell components and parts of various creatures. The glassware on the workbench is all useless, as a close inspection will quickly reveal. It is full of dried and hardened substances stuck to virtually all surfaces.

However, there are the following useful items of glassware and metalware, mostly found in the cabinets: 6 alembics, 1 balance and weights, 12 beakers, 1 brazier (already noted), 3 crucibles, 1 decanter, 4 flasks, 2 funnels, 1 kettle, 1 concave lens and 1 convex lens, 2 mortar-and-pestle sets, 12 phials, 2 retorts, 2 dozen mixing rods, 2 spatulas, 1 set of measuring spoons, 1 pair of tongs, 2 tripods, and 6 yards of glass tubing in foot-long sections.

Components for virtually all spells found in Malakon's spell books (see [32] below) may be found here in varying quantities. There will be only 1 or 2 spells' worth of components that are difficult to come by, and no gems will be found here. These components are all labeled in magic-user's runes appropriate to the level of the spell the component is used for. Thus, a magic-user able to use 1st through 4th level spells will be

able to read the labels of all components dealing with spells of up to 4th level. *Read Magic* would be required for the character to comprehend the labels of components for spells of 5th level and above.

The following significant items may be found in specimen jars: 1 pint of troll's blood (dehydrated, appears as black powder); 1 pint of nixie blood (dehydrated, appears as green powder); 2 square feet (in 6-inch squares) of mimic skin; and 1 jar containing 20 salamander scales. These jars are labeled, but cannot be read automatically and will always require *Read Magic* to comprehend. To use the dehydrated blood, characters simply have to add 1 pint of water to the powder.

There are also many jars which are empty or full of worthless bones and decomposed organisms.

It is assumed that characters will search thoroughly here so that they will find all the useful labeled jars. A complete search will take a maximum of 6 turns, decreased by 1 turn for every character beyond the fourth one who is taking part in the search; i.e., 5 characters can search the room in 5 turns, 6 characters in 4 turns, etc. If characters don't search carefully, there is only a 1% chance per round (cumulative) of finding even one of the four special jars.

The secret door in the northeast corner may be found by elves and half-elves on a roll of 1-2 on d10, or a roll of 1 on d10 by others. It slides east, again with a gripping strength of 18 or better needed to move it.

(32) Shelves line the walls of this room, and a large desk with a single chair behind it is in the approximate center of the room toward the south wall. On the desk are various objects. (Note: All the magical items listed below will be gone if Malakon got here first.)

Immediately obvious are 2 bottles and a heap of scrolls. Closer inspection will reveal that a 1½-foot-long slender piece of ivory, tipped with platinum and with many runes and glyphs inscribed upon it, lies in the center of the desk. There is also an inkwell and several quills, 4 pieces of unused vellum, and a large book on the desk. The shelves around the room are filled with scrolls. Here and there is a book or a tome.

The bottles on the desk are potions: One is of *Extra Healing*, the other of *Poly-morph Self*. The heap of scrolls are all non-magical and will crumble to dust if anyone touches them. The ivory object is a *Wand of Conjunction*. The book lying on the desk is Malek's 4-6th level spell book. It is protected by an *Explosive Runes* spell.

The desk has 2 sets of drawers, a pair on each side of the desk. The top right drawer contains a sack of gems. (This is the sack referred to earlier as the one which Malakon will attempt to grab before making his departure.) The sack holds 50 gems valued at 10 gp apiece, 20 gems of 50 gp value, 10 gems of 100 gp, 3 gems of 500 gp, and 1 gem valued at 1,000 gp.

The lower drawer on the right side contains Malakon's other two spell books: one for spells of 1st-3rd level and one for spells of 7th-9th level. The lower-level book, like the one on the desk, is protected by *Explosive Runes*. The highest-level spell book is protected by a *Fire Trap* spell. Note again that all spell books will have been taken away, as well as all magical scrolls, if Malakon got here first.

The top left drawer of the desk contains a variety of drawing and measuring instruments of high precision, worth a total of about 500 gp.

The lower drawer on the left side contains 2 magical scrolls. This drawer is protected with a *Fire Trap*. One of the scrolls contains 4 m-u spells: *Fly* (3rd level), *Polymorph Other* (4th level), *Ice Storm* (4th level), and *Hold Monster* (5th level). The other one has 6 spells: *Write* (1st level), *Shatter* (2nd level), *Poly-morph Self* (4th level), *Wall of Force* (5th level), *Legend Lore* (6th level), and *Control Weather* (6th level).

There are 17 six-foot-long sections of shelving, each with four shelves therein. All except three of these shelf sections contain between 10-100 scrolls each. These scrolls, like the ones on the desk top, will crumble into dust if touched. Of the other three shelves, two of them contain 3 and 9 books respectively. These books are still readable and usable, if they are handled with extreme caution.

Book topics include: 1. Anthropological report on inferiority of kobolds to gnomes (sale value 100 gp); 2. Herbal, lists plants local to one area and their supposed properties (500 gp); 3. Bestiary, lists animals local to one area (500

gp); 4. History of Cranshaw Castle, written by a notable scholar (1,000 gp); 5. Religious book containing prayers for an evil god (100 gp); 6. Anthropological report on the superiority of men to everything (200 gp); 7. History of Castle Dorvin, extremely notable work (5,000 gp); 8. Herbal, listing plant life of a different area than the other similar book (500 gp); 9. History of East Point Castle, author unknown (100 gp); 10. Alchemist's notebook, writing unreadable; 11. Malakon's old diary, might be very interesting, but handwriting difficult to decipher (2,000 gp); 12. Another alchemist's notebook, also unreadable.

The last shelf holds a +2 *Long Sword* with no special powers. Malakon will have taken this item if he arrived here ahead of the party.

The secret door in the west wall is hidden behind one of the scroll shelves. The shelving may be moved aside easily. The secret door is detectable by elves and half-elves on a roll of 1-2 on d6, by others on a roll of 1. It is *Wizard Locked* (17th level).

Contents of Malakon's spell books

First level spells: *Sleep, Shield, Write, Read Magic, Unseen Servant, Magic Missile, Protection from Good, Light, Comprehend Languages, Feather Fall.*

Second level spells: *Darkness 15' radius, Detect Invisibility, Knock, Levitate, Ray of Enfeeblement, Strength, Wizard Lock.*

Third level spells: *Explosive Runes, Fireball, Fly, Monster Summoning I, Slow, Water Breathing.*

Fourth level spells: *Dimension Door, Fear, Fire Trap, Ice Storm, Globe of Invulnerability, Plant Growth.*

Fifth level spells: *Bigby's Interposing Hand, Conjure Elemental, Cone of Cold, Monster Summoning III, Passwall.*

Sixth level spells: *Enchant an Item, Legend Lore, Monster Summoning IV, Spiritwrack.*

Seventh level spells: *Phase Door, Reverse Gravity.*

Eighth level spells: *Permanency, Trap the Soul.*

(33) This room contains two large chests, each having a complex lock and a poison-needle trap, but the poison has long since decayed. Each chest contains 5,000 sp and 5,000 gp.

(34) Visibility in this maze is good, but the ceiling height is only 3 feet. The letters on the map indicate where various traps are placed:

a: 30-foot-deep pit, does 3d6 damage.

b: Vent in ceiling drops oil equivalent to one flask, followed by a burning cinder which ignites oil; 1-12 points of damage, 1-3 if save made vs. breath weapon.

c: Stone block drops from ceiling; 2-24 damage, blocks passage.

d: Scything blade triggered by pressure plate; 4d6 damage.

e: 20-foot-deep pit with 6 spikes (1-6 points of damage each) at bottom; to determine number of spikes which strike character, roll d6, with result of 1, 2, or 3 indicating that many spikes, and result of 4, 5, or 6 indicating no damage from spikes. Fall into pit does 2d6 points of damage whether spikes hit or not.

f: Wall comes down out of ceiling, closing off exit and trapping those inside within a 20-by-10-foot area. Wall cannot be moved physically and will not open again for 20 turns.

g: Walls come down from ceiling in front and behind characters, closing off passage. The 10-foot-square space will then start to slowly fill with sand, taking 6 turns to fill to capacity. Either wall can be broken down if it takes 60 points of damage. Characters will suffocate within 1 round after sand fills chamber to capacity if they are still trapped inside.

h: Same as (d).

i: Same as (a).

j: Same as (b).

k: Same as (c).

l: *Glyph of Warding*, causes 18 points of fire damage (half damage if save made).

m: Same as (e).

n: Same as (f).

In the last 10 feet of the passageway in front of the first secret door, the ceiling is normal height (10 feet). Both secret doors are normal, with a 10-foot ceiling also in the area between them, but only one of the doors may be opened at one time. Thus, the second secret door will resist all attempts to be opened unless and until the first door is closed.

(35) Characters looking into this passageway will be quite unnerved, because all of the surfaces seem to be made of flesh. This spiral passageway was created by Malakon from instructions he found in an ancient tome, which vanished as soon as the construction was complete.

Anyone stepping into this passage or prodding the walls will find themselves, or the instrument they used to prod with, stuck fast to the fleshy substance. Characters have the same chance as their bend bars/lift gates percentage of being able to break free, and may try to pull free once per round. In the meantime, the fleshy wall will start to climb up whatever is stuck to it, gradually coating the object with a thin layer of the fleshy substance. It will take 5-10 (d6 + 4) rounds for a victim to be completely coated with the substance.

Any character or creature entirely covered by the flesh will be suffocated within two rounds after being covered, and immediately after that the fleshy substance and its new victim will begin to draw back into the floor or ceiling of the passage. This process of reabsorption

takes a total of five rounds for a human-sized creature, correspondingly more or less time for those of larger or smaller size. Once a creature has been absorbed into the wall or ceiling, its body cannot be recovered or resurrected.

Blows upon the fleshy substance with blunt weapons will simply cause the weapon to stick at the spot it made contact, doing no damage. Weapons can be pulled free by making a bend bars/lift gates roll as described above, but must be extricated in the round after they are stuck, or they will be coated with flesh and forever lost.

Edged weapons will pierce the flesh, but the wound so caused will instantly heal and the weapon will be stuck fast if it is not pulled back immediately. Fire ap-

plied to a place where the flesh is covering a person or thing will cause it to retreat, but will cause no damage. A magical cold attack will cause the fleshy substance to go dormant for one turn within the attack's area of effect.

There is nothing that can permanently damage the fleshy substance; a *Disintegrate* spell will render the substance inert in a 10-foot-square area around the spell caster for a duration of 6 turns; at the end of that time, the fleshy substance will have receded back into the wall or ceiling at that location, perhaps dropping a character or object which had previously been entrapped. A *Flesh to Stone* spell will simply be absorbed with no effect.

There is one obviously safe way to get

through this passage: by flying. At the center of the fleshy spiral is a circular stone room 20 feet in diameter with a normal secret door on the north edge. Inside this room is a pedestal. On top of the pedestal is a velvet cushion, and on the velvet cushion is a small necklace with a single tiny gem — *not* a psychogem — set in it.

This gem, the existence of which was unknown to the group who defeated Malakon, is why the champions were unable to completely dispose of Malakon: The gem carries inside it a small portion of Malakon's soul—a "spark" which Malakon can use to rekindle his consciousness. (Characters must use detection and divination spells to learn this or other information about the gem.)



Destroying this gem will not directly harm Malakon while he is in his present physical form, nor will it damage the part of his soul in his newly acquired body. However, Malakon fears the opposite — that if the gem is destroyed, the act will do him immense harm. Therefore, he will bargain to prevent characters from harming the gem, freely giving up any of his possessions except his spell books, in exchange for the gem. (If characters

agree to such a deal, Malakon will depart with the gem — but only temporarily — and will then trail the characters as they make their way out of the dungeon, waiting for a good opportunity to attempt to regain his possessions.

The only way to dispose of Malakon entirely is to first kill the physical body he occupies. When the death of the body occurs, Malakon's soul is transferred entirely into the small gem, and for two

rounds thereafter his soul/ consciousness will be powerless to resist or prevent the destruction of the gem. If the gem is destroyed during this two-round span, all traces of Malakon's soul will be destroyed along with it. After the two rounds have passed, though, Malakon's soul will regain the ability to transfer into another body — and that body will then have to be killed in order for the process to be begun again.

IDDC II Prize Winners

Advanced Division

FIRST PLACE

The Garden of Nefaron

Howard de Wied, Boston, Mass.

SECOND PLACE

The Wandering Trees

Michael Malone, San Diego, Calif.

THIRD PLACE

Quest of the Midas Orb

Jennie M. Good, Groton, Conn.

FOURTH PLACE

Obeatus Vigilard

Douglas Selph, El Cerrito, Calif.

FIFTH PLACE

Catskull

Michael H. Reitzel, Sagamore Hills, Ohio

Listed above are the titles of the entries which won prizes in International Dungeon Design Contest II for excellence in design and presentation of an adventure written for use with the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game. Listed below is what the winners won.

Howard de Wied, who developed "The Garden of Nefaron" for use in his campaign while he was a student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, receives \$250 for the entry which was judged the best. That is the amount which was supposed to be given to the overall winner of the competition in the Basic and Advanced Divisions, as specified by the original rules for the contest. However, it was discovered during the judging process that there would be no

adequate way to compare a Basic D&D® module and an ADVANCED D&D™ module. So, instead of giving \$250 to the grand prize winner, it was decided to award that amount to both "divisional" champions.

Michael Malone will receive a \$100 prize for his second-place entry, "The Wandering Trees." As stipulated in the contest rules, this adventure will be published in an upcoming issue of DRAGON™ magazine. Jennie M. Good receives the \$50 award for third place for her "Quest of the Midas Orb." That adventure may be published as well, if time and scheduling considerations permit.

Each of the five winners will also receive a one-year subscription to DRAGON magazine.

The RASMUSSEN Files

‘ ‘The item you want
is temporarily
out of stock...’ ’

TOP SECRET

©1980, TSR Games

by Merle M. Rasmussen

SECURITY CLEARANCE LEVEL: Administration, Level One

BEGIN MESSAGE

TO: Operatives and participants of the TOP SECRET™ game, especially Administrators and members of "The Exterminators" and "Squadron III"

BY AUTHORITY OF: Merle M. Rasmussen, Director of Administrations

PURPOSE: To present recent agency communiques for updating regional agency files; to recommend methods of reprimanding overly violent agents; to amend procedures for determining availability of equipment, and exceptions to same.

MESSAGE: Communications from agents within the U. S. and Great Britain have been received. Additional messages are being decoded, but the following is available for general dispersal.

NAME: Classified

CODE NUMBER: Unknown

ALIAS: Dale Craig

AFFILIATION: The Exterminators (Council Bluffs, Iowa, USA)

POSITION: Unknown

CLASSIFICATION: Assassination

MEMBERSHIP: Three (3) known

MODUS OPERANDI: Submachine gun slayings, use of ball-point pen guns, travel around United States in armored van with gun slits in back and sides. The van is disguised as one belonging to a pest control company called "The Exterminators." Subject believed to have owned a hydrofoil destroyed off the coast of Japan. Believed to possess a two-person helicopter with special submachine gun mounted underneath disguised as a radar dish. Believed to have exploding darts propelled from wrist launcher, usable underwater. The "Exterminators" usually seek high-risk missions, but lately members are divided on case involvement and the indiscriminate use of violence. Group members believed to have once been employed as security guards for oceanographic architect-engineer, Dr. Yes.

CURRENT STATUS: Inactive, seeking less violent missions.
END INFORMATION

The following information is from a direct communique.

NAME: Classified

CODE NUMBER: A-A-N-HR-11

ALIAS: Head Rat

AFFILIATION: Squadron III (Richmond, Va., USA)

POSITION: Administrative Director

CLASSIFICATION: Unknown

PURPOSE OF COMMUNICATION: To invite Merle M. Rasmussen, Director of Administrations, to become Administrative Advisor to the Administrative Staff of Squadron III.

REPLY: I accept the position on the condition that all communications from the Director of Administration can be shared with other agents via *The Rasmussen Files* in DRAGON™ magazine. This includes answering questions the administration (of Squadron III) might have regarding Squadron III activities, aiding the staff in its organizational procedures, and advising of any changes in the rules of the TOP SECRET game. As a benefit, I understand that I would receive any Squadron III information that I wish, as long as it is Clearance Level 10 or below.
END REPLY

The following came from an agent in hopes someone would investigate and report to the Director of Administrations.

NAME: Michael P. Clarke

CODE NUMBER: Unknown

ALIAS: Unknown

AFFILIATION: Unknown (Whitewater, Wis., USA)

POSITION: Unknown

CLASSIFICATION: Unknown

PROJECT: Nesebar

LOCATION: Bahia Blanca, Argentina

MISSION: To assassinate Dr. Vlad Tomplin, researcher and developer of the secret Tomplin warhead outlawed by SALT II.

CURRENT STATUS: Tomplin is scheduled to travel to Nesebar, Bulgaria, via Burgas, Bulgaria.

END SUBMISSION

This final message was received postage due from Worthing, West Sussex, England, postmarked 1:45 PM, April 13, 1981. It is evidence the TOP SECRET game system has enemies as well as avid followers. It may also be in code; note illiterate spellings, punctuation, and lack of dotted i's and crossed t's in the original. Agent interpretations are welcome; the poor bloke did not sign his or her name and may need immediate assistance.

BEGIN LETTER: "Dear Mr. Rasmussen (are you a [expletive deleted])?"

Personally I think that your game? TOP SECRET is the worst role playing game I have ever tried to play, it stinks more than an eight month old deceased dog. I think Don Turnbull could talk more about finding hobbits in the PH than you could about pistols. It is either you or the Game master + I think it's your stupid bloody game its 3 times worse than some of the white Dwarf dungeons + thats saying something.

Yours, Ungratefully
a [expletive deleted] player"

END LETTER

Controlling violent agents

It has come to my attention that certain agents, especially assassins, sometimes use excessive violence during the completion of an otherwise smooth operation. Gunning down inno-

cent bystanders and defenseless civilians for fun or experience is inexcusable. I suggest administrators severely reprimand agents employing such tactics. If a mission does not call for an assassin, don't hire one! This gives investigators, confiscators, and technicians larger defensive roles in possibly dangerous missions. If indiscriminate violence continues, use the optional Complications rule found in the rule book. If agents must pay off crooked cops, appear in court, risk being pursued by private investigators, or lose expensive equipment because of violent tendencies, violence may subside. Imagine having an unknown number of "private eyes" on your tail who always show up at the least convenient moments during a mission. Losses incurred by such an agent should not be temporary and simply recovered during the agent's next R&R. Stolen equipment costs add up, and can cause an agent embarrassment and financial ruin.

Equipment availability

I have heard complaints some agents get any piece of equipment they need if they can afford it. This is not always plausible; nor is it a recommended. Special equipment may be affordable, but lack of time and staff to manufacture a requested article may limit its availability. Purchases or equipment requests during a mission may take days to reach the agent, especially if he's mountain climbing, deep sea diving, or lost in the Mongolian desert. Why would an investigator carry a cumbersome assault rifle on a simple bugging mission? Possession and use of excessive armament may ruin delicate assignments.

There should be some logical reason to explain equipment availability. The following charts will serve as guidelines in allotting equipment to agents operating in a group. Refer to the Equipment Lists in the rulebook for specific selection.

The chance of a certain piece of equipment being available is represented as a percentage equal to (X minus Y) divided by X, where X is a number value for a general type of equipment and Y is the suggested price of the specific item requested. The following list gives the "X" values for various general types of equipment:

- General Outfitting: 250
- Tools of the Trade: 1,000
- Weapons (not including firearms): 150
- Firearms: 550
- Ammunition: 200
- Special Weapons (not including poisons, antidotes and explosives): 300
- Poisons: 650
- Antidotes: 63
- Explosives: 52
- Communications: 11,000
- Automobiles: 20,000
- Specialty vehicles: 10,000
- Two-wheeled vehicles: 2,000
- Larger (than small truck) vehicles: 75,000
- Waterborne vehicles: 300,000

Note: For special devices not covered by this list, consider the "X" value to be equal to 110% of the price (Y).

Example: If I want to purchase one dose of irritant poison, I look under Poisons to find the X value, which is 650. Irritant poison costs \$510 a dose, so Y = 510. The percentage chance of availability is (650 minus 510) divided by 650, which equals .22, or a 22% chance of availability.

Checks for availability may be made no more frequently than once every 24 hours, but if an item is not available on the first try, the percentage chance of locating it is doubled on the second try, and increased on each subsequent try by the same amount as the original percentage chance. If the percentage chance reaches or exceeds 100, the item will automatically be available on that day.

In the above example, there was a 22% chance the poison would be available on the first day, a 44% chance on the second try, 66% on the third day, 88% on the fourth, and 100% (automatic) on the fifth.

If the agent is in the field, consider the price of vehicles, personnel, and fuel necessary to deliver the item when calculating its price for purposes of determining availability, even if all the "hidden costs" are not actually included in the cost to the agent.

If the item is to be obtained from illegal sources — the so-called "black market" —double the chance of availability each time the offered price is doubled. In the case of the poison, which costs \$510 per dose, if you're willing to pay \$1,020 per dose there is a 44% chance it will arrive on the first day, an 88% chance on the second, and a 100% chance that it will be available within 72 hours.

You can use the same availability method, when selling or fencing an item, to determine how many hours it takes to find a prospective buyer. Even then, the prospective buyer does not automatically purchase the item once he or she is contacted. Refer to the rules on Fencing Purloined Goods in the rulebook.

Technicians can use the availability formula for creating items in a laboratory or workshop. Halve the chance of availability if the technician must work in the field without the necessary tools or instruments and only has the supplies or ingredients needed. Some special devices which are difficult to manufacture even in the lab may be impossible to create in the field.

Availability exceptions

Even though particular items may be physically available, a veteran administrator will not give some equipment to agents until they have proved themselves reliable and capable. This is why only Technicians are allowed the use of Special Devices before they reach the fourth level of experience and other agents are not.

General exceptions to availability are given in the following chart, which lists equipment by types and subdivides agents according to their bureau classification and experience levels. The number given for each cross-reference is the percentage chance that an agent of a certain type and level will be allowed to receive a particular item.

For example, an investigator at the third level of experience has only a 20% chance of being given a requested pistol. Roll percentile dice: On a roll of 01 to 20, the investigator would be allowed to request and receive a pistol — if he or she can afford it, and if the subsequent roll for availability is eventually successful. On a roll of 21 to 00 the investigator will not be allowed to obtain the pistol through normal channels, and if still desirous of one will have to find another source for it. This provision allows for the possibility of higher-level agents purchasing equipment which could be loaned or sold to lower-level characters at possibly inflated prices. However, administrators may not like this sales arrangement and might reprimand higher-level agents — if they're caught!

		Availability Exceptions					
		Investigation	Bureau				
		1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11+
General	Outfitting	none: always 100%					
Tools of the Trade		60	70	80	90	100	100
Weapons (not firearms)		40	50	60	70	80	90
Pistols		10	20	40	60	80	100
Carbines, rifles, shotguns		0	0	10	20	30	40
Submachine guns, assault rifles		0%: never available					
Spearguns, bows, crossbows, slings		0	0	10	20	30	40
Ammunition (S,AP,DD, G,DP,F,M,T,B)		none: always 100%					
Ammunition (I,API, HE,HEI)		0%: never available					

Special weapons (not poisons, antidotes, explosives)	50	60	70	80	90	100
Poisons			0%: never available			
Antidotes	0	10	20	30	40	50
Explosives			0%: never available			
Communications	60	70	80	90	100	100
Automobile	0	10	20	30	40	50
Specialty vehicle	0	0	10	20	30	40
Two-wheeled vehicle	10	20	30	40	50	60
Larger vehicle	0	0	10	20	30	40
Waterborne vehicle	0	10	20	30	40	50
Airborne vehicle	0	0	10	20	30	40
Special devices:						
Communication	0	0	60	70	80	90
Surveillance	0	0	60	70	80	90
Assassination	0	0	40	50	60	70
Motorcycle	0	0	10	20	30	40
Automobile	0	0	0	10	20	30
Water vehicle	0	0	0	10	20	30
Helicopter/gyrocopter	0	0	0	0	10	20
Miscellaneous	0	0	20	30	40	50

**Availability Exceptions
Confiscation Bureau**

	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11+
General Outfitting			none: always 100%			
Tools of the Trade	20	40	60	80	100	100
Weapons (not firearms)	20	30	40	50	60	70
Pistols	10	20	30	40	50	60
Carbines, rifles, shotguns	0	0	0	10	20	30

Submachine guns, assault rifles			0%: never available			
Spearguns, bows, crossbows, slings			0%: never available			
Ammunition (S,AP,DD, G,DP,F,M,T,B)			none: always 100%			
Ammunition (I,API, HE,HEI)			0%: never available			

Special weapons (not poisons, antidotes, explosives)	40	50	60	70	80	90
Poisons			0%: never available			
Antidotes	0	0	10	20	30	40
Explosives			0%: never available			
Communications	10	20	30	40	50	60
Automobile	60	70	80	90	100	100
Specialty vehicle	50	60	70	80	90	100
Two-wheeled vehicle	70	80	90	100	100	100
Larger vehicle	50	60	70	80	90	100
Waterborne vehicle	50	60	70	80	90	100
Airborne vehicle	40	50	60	70	80	90
Special devices:						
Communication	0	0	10	20	30	40
Surveillance	0	0	20	40	60	80
Assassination	0	0	20	30	40	50
Motorcycle	0	0	70	80	90	100
Automobile	0	0	60	70	80	90
Water vehicle	0	0	50	60	70	80
Helicopter/gyrocopter	0	0	40	50	60	70
Miscellaneous	0	0	30	40	50	60

Availability Exceptions Assassination Bureau

	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11+
General Outfitting			none: always 100%			
Tools of the Trade	30	50	70	90	100	100
Weapons (not firearms)	90	100	100	100	100	100
Pistols	90	100	100	100	100	100
Carbines, rifles, shotguns	45	55	60	65	70	75

Submachine guns, assault rifles	0	10	20	30	40	50
Spearguns, bows, crossbows, slings	90	100	100	100	100	100
Ammunition (S,AP,DD, G,DP,F,M,T,B)			none: always 100%			
Ammunition (I,API, HE,HEI)	0	10	20	30	40	50
Special weapons (not poisons, antidotes, explosives)	60	70	80	90	100	100
Poisons	0	10	20	30	40	50
Antidotes	20	30	40	50	60	70
Explosives	0	0	10	20	30	40
Communications	0	0	10	20	30	40
Automobile	0	0	10	20	30	40
Specialty vehicle	0	0	0	10	20	30
Two-wheeled vehicle	0	10	20	30	40	50
Larger vehicle	0	0	0	10	20	30
Waterborne vehicle	0	0	0	10	20	30
Airborne vehicle	0	0	0	10	20	30
Special devices:						
Communication	0	0	0	0	10	20
Surveillance	0	0	30	50	70	90
Assassination	0	0	90	100	100	100
Motorcycle	0	0	0	10	20	30
Automobile	0	0	0	0	10	20
Water vehicle	0	0	0	0	0	10
Helicopter/gyrocopter	0	0	0	0	0	10
Miscellaneous	0	0	10	20	30	40

**Availability Exceptions
Technical Bureau**

	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11+
General Outfitting			none: always 100%			
Tools of the Trade	70	80	90	100	100	100
Weapons (not firearms)	20	30	40	50	60	70
Pistols	10	10	20	20	30	30
Carbines, rifles, shotguns	0	0	0	0	10	10
Submachine guns, assault rifles			0%: never available			
Spearguns, bows, crossbows, slings	10	10	20	20	30	30
Ammunition (S,AP,DD, G,DP,F,M,T,B)			none: always 100%			
Ammunition (I,API, HE,HEI)	0	0	10	20	30	40
Special weapons (not poisons, antidotes, explosives)	50	60	70	80	90	100
Poisons	0	0	10	20	30	40
Antidotes	40	50	60	70	80	100
Explosives	0	0	0	10	20	30
Communications	60	70	80	90	100	100
Automobile	10	20	30	40	50	60
Specialty vehicle	0	10	20	30	40	50
Two-wheeled vehicle	20	30	40	50	60	70
Larger vehicle	40	50	60	70	80	90
Waterborne vehicle	20	30	40	50	60	70
Airborne vehicle	10	20	30	40	50	60
Special devices:						
Communication	60	70	80	90	100	100
Surveillance	70	80	90	100	100	100
Assassination	20	30	40	50	60	70
Motorcycle	20	30	40	50	60	70
Automobile	10	20	30	40	50	60
Water vehicle	20	30	40	50	60	70
Helicopter/gyrocopter	10	20	30	40	50	60
Miscellaneous	30	40	50	60	70	80

Dragon's Bestiary

Argas

Created by James Hopkins II

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*
 NO. APPEARING: 1-20
 ARMOR CLASS: *See below*
 MOVE: 12"/24"
 HIT DICE: 1-20 (*see below*)
 % IN LAIR: 80%
 TREASURE TYPE: *M,N individuals; B,C in lair*
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type*
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Magic draining*
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
 INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional to Genius*
 ALIGNMENT: *Lawful good*
 SIZE: *M (6' tall)*
 PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*
 Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil*

The argas (singular and plural), although actually reptilian in nature, appear somewhat humanoid. Their bodies, which range from green to deep blue to violet in color, are covered with scales.

The Argas devote their lives to the fulfillment of good. They are on a never-ending quest against evil, and will not hesitate to attack any evil monster which does not seem to have an obvious advantage over them. If backing down from a confrontation seems like a safer course, the argas will attempt to recruit aid and come back later with a larger force to defeat the evil threat. Argas are generally reclusive, but can now and again be encountered searching for some evil foe.

An argas has armor class 9 when it is born. The creature's AC can be improved by the devouring of certain metals. Its digestive fluids dissolve these metals into liquid, and this liquid is then secreted and absorbed into the scales, after which it solidifies. This process takes place gradually over a period of 1-4 days (depending on the type of metal, as outlined below). It is accompanied by a softening of the creature's scales (while their molecular structure is being altered) which gives the argas an AC of 9 for the duration of the digestive process, even if it had previously ingested another type of metal. All of the argas' other abilities and characteristics are unaffected. At the end of the 1-4 days and from then on until the Argas' death (or until it ingests a harder metal) it will retain the newly acquired AC.



Different metals can be consumed in this fashion no more frequently than once per month, and each metal which improves an argas' AC can only be ingested once in the creature's life. Also, each metal must be devoured in quantities of 100gp (10 lbs.) weight to improve the argas' armor class. Lesser quantities will have no effect, and an argas will never voluntarily consume less than the required amount. If this occurs, the argas cannot consume any more metal for one month, but the same metal may be ingested again at a later time.

Iron, mithril, and adamantite cause the argas to immediately assume a certain AC upon hardening (iron, AC 2; mithril, AC -1; and adamantite, AC -3), while gold and silver only cause a subtraction from AC (gold, -2 to AC; silver, -1 to AC).

The digestive process takes 1 day for gold or silver, 2 days for iron, 3 days for mithril and 4 days for adamantite.

Example: A newborn Argas which consumes 100 gp weight of gold becomes AC 7 (9-2=7). Gold and silver can be used to subtract from an already improved AC (gained from devouring iron, mithril, or adamantite). The effects of gold and silver are cumulative. The best AC an argas can achieve is -6, gained by devouring 100 gp weight of adamantite followed by 100 gp weight of both gold and silver.

Argas have the ability to drain magical power from a weapon or magic item. They gain hit dice and special abilities according to the amount of magical power they absorb in their lifetimes. An argas can drain power from an item by

touching it (or being touched with it). Artifacts, relics and scrolls are not affected by this power, and neither are characters or creatures which are magical in nature. Weapons and magic items of good alignment will not willingly be drained by an argas, but may still suffer the loss of power if they are brought in contact with the creature (since the magic-draining power itself is an involuntary function). When it is in the presence of a magical object which is not good in alignment or is not being held or employed by a good character, the argas will look for an opportunity to come into contact with the object — perhaps even allowing itself to be hit with a magical weapon in order to be able to drain it.

Each time any magic weapon or device hits or touches the argas by way of an attack from another being, there is a 50% chance that the item will be immediately drained of its power. An item used in a magical attack will become a normal item of the same type, unchanged in physical appearance but devoid of magical abilities. The item will do no damage from the attack which caused it to be drained. A magical weapon will become a normal weapon of the same type, and damage on the hit which drained it will be computed as for a normal weapon.

If an argas comes within 50 feet of a magic weapon or device it wishes to drain and that item is not used in an attack against the creature, the argas must first attune itself to the particular item. The chance of doing this is 5% for each hit die of the argas, and a new attempt may be made every round for as long as the item is in range. *Detect Magic* will reveal that magical power is being employed upon the item in question, but will not reveal the nature or purpose of the magic. Once an argas becomes attuned to an item, there is a 25% chance for the creature to drain that item (check once per round) from a distance.

For every certain amount of power that is drained, the Argas gains a hit die and possibly a new special ability (see table below). The amount of power in an item is measured by the following system:

Swords: 100 power points (pp) per "+"; 20 pp per point of intelligence; 10 pp per point of ego; 5 pp for each language it can speak; 50 pp for each primary power; 100 pp for each extraordinary power; and 100 pp if sword has special purpose.

Miscellaneous weapons: 100 pp per "+"; 100 pp for a special ability (*Crossbows of Speed or Distance*, *Mace of Disruption*, etc.), and 200 pp for each extraordinary ability (*Arrow of Slaying*, *Dagger of Venom*, *Hammer of Thunderbolts*, etc.).

Armor: 100 pp per "+"; 100 pp for a special ability (*Armor of Etherealness*, *Armor of Vulnerability*, *Shield of Missile Attraction*, etc.).

Potions: 100-500 pp, depending upon power/potency and type of effect.*

5. Rings: 100-1,000 pp, as #4.*

6. Rods, staves and wands: 2 pp per charge, 100 pp for each ability if it has offensive capabilities (fear, fireball, cold, etc.); 50 pp for each defensive ability (healing, absorption, etc.); and 25 pp for any other capability (illusion, detection, etc.). Special cases: A *Wand of Wonder* is worth 200 pp + 2 pp per charge; a *Rod of Lordly Might* is worth 400 pp + 1 pp per charge; a *Staff of Power* is worth 500 pp +

2 per charge, and a *Staff of the Magi* is worth 1,000 + 2 per charge.

7. Miscellaneous magic: 100-2,000 pp, as #4.*

*Note: Precise power-point figures for these items should be set by the DM, according to an item's power in comparison with other items of the same category which are employed in the campaign.

The following chart shows the argas' progression in hit dice and special abilities, and the magical power points necessary to achieve each new level:

Accumulated pp gained from devouring magic	8-sided hit dice	Special abilities
0-999	1	Detect Good at will
1,000-1,999	2	Detect Evil at will
2,000-2,999	3	Invisibility 4/day
3,000-3,999	4	Teleportation 2/day
4,000-4,999	5	Continual Light 3/day
5,000-6,999	6	(None gained)
7,000-8,999	7	Polymorph 2/day
9,000-10,999	8	Tongues (as spell) 2/day
11,000-12,999	9	(None gained)
13,000-14,999	10	Summon monster, up to 6 HD; 1/day; must always be of good alignment.
15,000-17,999	11	Telepathy at will
18,000-20,999	12	(None gained)
21,000-23,999	13	Fireball 1/day*
24,000-26,999	14	Create Illusion 2/day
27,000-30,999	15	Conjure water elemental of 12 HD; 1/day
31,000-34,999	16	(None gained)
35,000-38,999	17	Immunity to cold
39,000-42,999	18	Hallucinatory Terrain 1/day
43,000-49,000	19	New Body**
50,000+	20	Etherealness 2/day

*The argas can throw a 6-die fireball, gaining 1 extra die of damage per 2 hit dice gained thereafter. At 20 hit dice, it can throw a 10-die fireball.

**New Body allows the argas to magically create a body which is a replica of its own. This body is dormant until the Argas dies, at which time its spirit takes over the new body. The "reborn" argas has 1 hit die again, but it retains the AC which the argas' old body had when the new body was created. The new argas will have memories of its past, but will not retain special abilities or the power to attune itself to magic items which it had when it was a 19- or 20-hit-dice creature. Creating a new body may only be done once by any particular argas, even if the New Body so created also reaches 19 hit dice.

Argas are amphibious, but they prefer water to land. Their lair is usually an underwater fortress (80% of the time), and is sometimes (20%) located in cave complexes near a large body of water.

Argas cannot hold magic items or employ any magic items which require physical contact to operate, because the magic-draining power cannot be controlled. An argas cannot physically transport magical treasures to its lair because of this, but can call upon a summoned monster or other type of servant to perform this task, or perform it magically. All magic items found in an argas lair are of good alignment; all others would have been drained, not kept.

Argas can fight with several different weapons, and those of 18 or more hit

dice can use 2 weapons at the same time without penalty. Their weaponry is:

Trident and sword	20%
Trident and flail	20%
Sword and flail	10%
Trident and net	10%*
Axe and Sword	10%
Axe and flail	10%
Sword	10%
Flail	10%

* — If an Argas attacks successfully with a net (by making a "to hit" roll) the victim must save vs. petrification or be entrapped in the net, unable to attack for 1-4 rounds.

The average life expectancy of an argas is 100 years, although some have been known to live to more than 200 years of age.

Dragon's Bestiary

Oculon

Created by Roger E. Moore

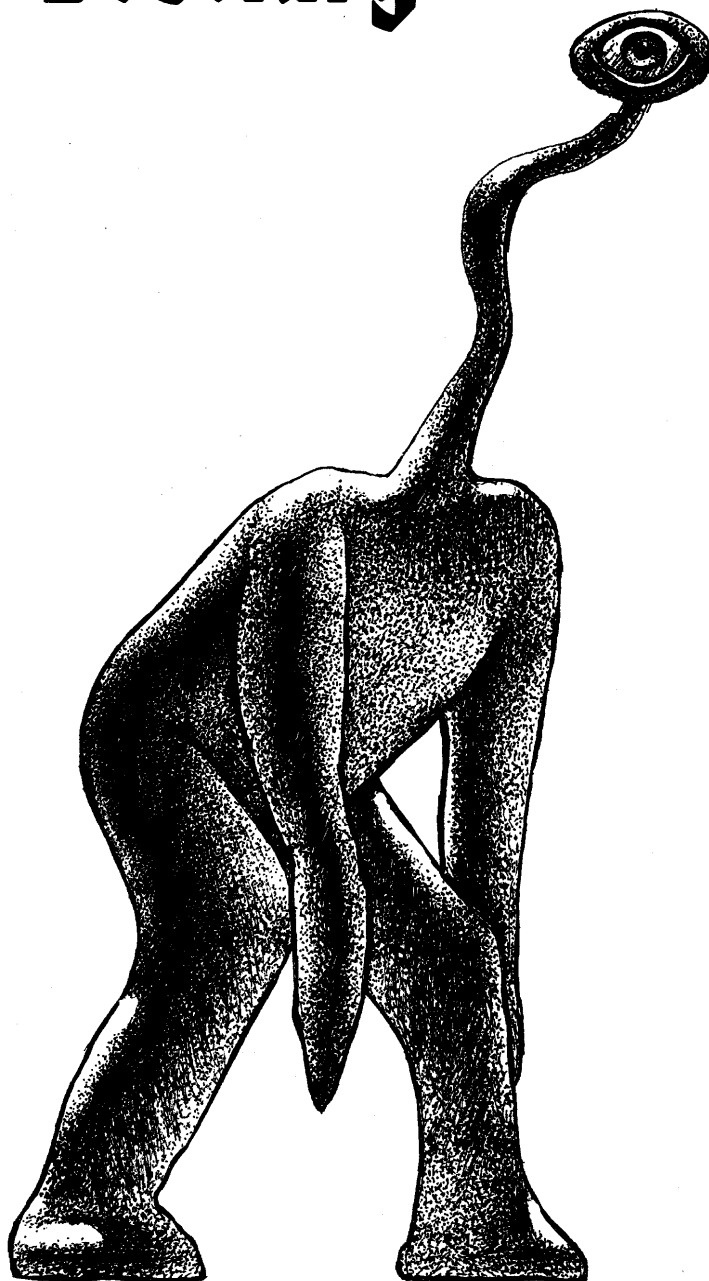
FREQUENCY: *Very rare*
 NUMBER APPEARING: 1
 ARMOR CLASS: 4
 MOVE: 15"
 HIT DICE: 7 (30 hit points)
 % IN LAIR: *Nil*
 TREASURE TYPE: *Nil*
 NUMBER OF ATTACKS: 1
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type*
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
 INTELLIGENCE: *Average (with considerable cunning)*
 ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*
 SIZE: *M*
 PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil (immune to psionic attacks)*

The oculon is an enchanted monster created by a high-level magic-user to act as an assistant or guardian. The process of creating one is long and quite involved, but the resulting being is fairly powerful because of the many special skills it has. An oculon is humanoid in shape, though only vaguely so, and is 4 feet tall at the shoulder. Instead of a human head, the oculon has a flexible neck about 3 feet in length with a single large eye at the end. The neck is 2" in diameter and the eye is 4" across.

There is no rigid internal skeleton; the oculon's movements appear somewhat rubbery, and it can flatten into a mobile blob of matter only 9" high, covering 6 square feet. When flattened oculons move at one-third normal speed and do not attack.

An oculon can only be hit by weapons of a magical nature. In addition, the lack of a skeleton allows this creature to take only half damage from falls and from attacks made by blunt weapons when in its semi-humanoid form. When in its flattened form, the cannot be damaged at all by falls or blunt weapons, because the body will "give" and absorb the impact of the blow.

An oculon will take verbal commands only from the magic-user who helped create it. It can understand and obey a reasonably complex set of instructions and may operate on its own for a considerable period of time.



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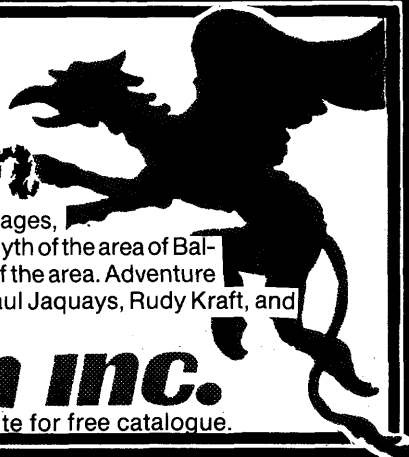
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Small-sized melee weapons may be handled by an oculon in combat, but they cannot use missile weapons. If an oculon succeeds in attacking from behind it will do double damage to the victim. Also, the large eye may fire up to seven *magic missiles* per day at a maximum rate of one per round. These missiles do 1-6 points damage each and strike opponents as if launched by a 7-hit-dice monster; they have a 180' range but there are no penalties "to hit" when firing upon a target at medium or long range.

Oculons may hide in shadows with 80% success. They can move about in complete silence, surprising opponents on a score of 1-4 on a 6-sided die. They cannot be caught in a *Web* or snared, netted, or grasped in any way; treat as if they were coated with *Oil of Slipperiness*.

Narra

Created by Jeff Goelz

FREQUENCY: *Rare*
NO. APPEARING: 2-6
ARMOR CLASS: 4
MOVE: 18"
HIT DICE: 6x6
% IN LAIR: 20%
TREASURE TYPE: R,X
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-7/2-7
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 20%
INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful good*
SIZE: L
PSIONIC ABILITY: 80-150
Attack/Defense modes: B, C, D/all

These creatures are extremely and fervently lawful good. They will succor all lawful good creatures and will help them to attain any objective which furthers the cause of that alignment. They will be kindly disposed to any character or creature type of good alignment. They often act as guards or minions for nobles of lawful good alignment, when no other mission demands their attention.

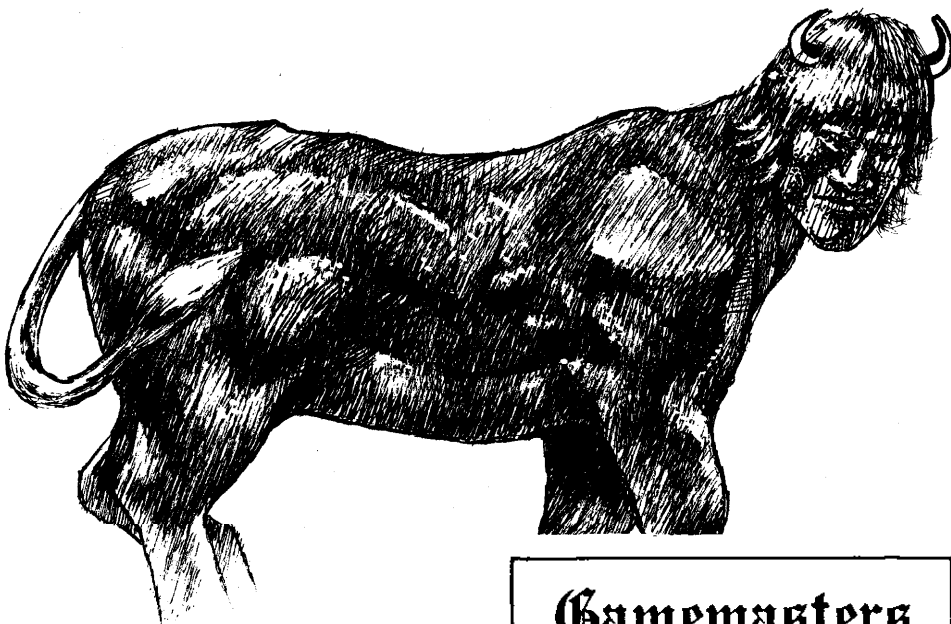
Narras can speak lawful good, shedu, lammasu, ki-rin, and common. They have the ability to become ethereal at will and can use some clerical spells with the effectiveness of a 6th-level cleric. The spells include:

Up to once per day each — *Light, Purify Food and Drink, Slow Poison, Continual Light, Create Food and Water, Cure Blindness, Cure Disease.*

Up to 3 times per day each — *Bless* (only on lawful good creatures), *Cure Light Wounds, Dispel Magic, Prayer.*

Up to once per round, only one spell in any single round — *Detect Evil, Detect Magic, Know Alignment.*

Narra (singular and plural) can perform the following psionic disciplines at 10th level of mastery: *Body Equilibrium, Empathy, Sensitivity to Psychic Impressions, Mind Bar, and Telepathy.*



When not in ethereal form, a narra has the body of a small bull and the head of a man with small, bull-like horns. The body is white, cream, or tan in color.



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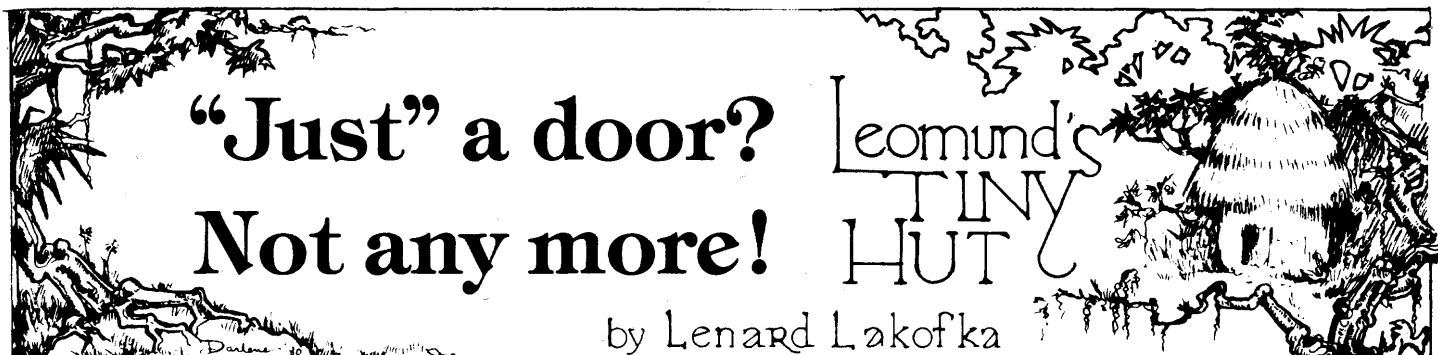
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An adventure has finally ended, with both great loss and great gain to the party. Most notably, Charlie the fighter has become a Lord (9th level), Ponifax the cleric has become a High Priestess (9th level) and Wizbangzap the magic-user has become a Wizard (11th level). Suddenly all three player characters realize that each is allowed to establish a headquarters building. They have already cleared the area they have set aside for the structure and are ready to begin construction.

This article will deal with three aspects of building a castle, tower or temple:

1. Closures (i.e. doors, portcullises, drawbridges, etc.)
2. Magical traps and guards (Glyph of Warding, Magic Mouth, Wizard Lock, etc.)
3. Teleporters

Further, it will deal with the means of encountering these constructs and magics in the course of an adventure.

Doors

The door to a farmer's hut is not the same as the door to the treasure vault in an old dungeon. However, Strength Table II in the AD&D™ Players Handbook considers all doors in the same way. If a figure with strength 16 shoulders a door that is stuck, he/she simply has a 50% chance to open it (1-3 on d6).

I prefer to give the door a Counter Strength. This is a number, that measures the door's ability to withstand the physical strength of the character. If the character is stronger than the door, he/she will always open it on the first try. If he/she is not, then successive attempts must be made. If the door is more than three points stronger than the character, he/she cannot open it by physical strength unless he/she is willing to break the door (or the bar, lock, etc. holding it shut).

A character's chance of opening a stuck or abnormally heavy door depends on the difference between the door strength and the character's physical strength. If the difference is 3 or more in favor of the door, the chance to open the door (without breaking it) per attempt is 0%; a difference of 2 is a 30% chance; a difference of 1 is a 65% chance; if door strength and character strength are equal, the chance is 85%, and if the character strength is greater than the strength of the stuck or heavy door, the chance is 100%. Thus, if a door were rated as physical strength 13 and a character of strength 11 shouldered it, he/she would have a 30% chance per try to open it. Successive attempts would be allowed.

What are the strengths of normal "stuck" or heavy doors? The following is a list of types of door, listed according to what they enclose and (sometimes) the condition they are in, and the usual strength factor of such a door:

- Peasant's hut — usual strength 4-10 (2d4+2);
- Ordinary shop, inn, tavern — 3-12 (3d4);
- Temple main door — 8-13 (d4+4);
- Castle door to courtyard — 9-15 (d6+8);
- Dungeon door (good repair) — 8-17 (3d4+5);
- Dungeon door (warped but firm) — 10-17 (d8+9);
- Dungeon door (rotten) — 3-10 (d8+2);
- Treasure room — 12-19 (d8+11).

Teamwork: Multiple figures can pool their strengths. Use the

physical strength of the strongest figure as the base. Add 1 point to this for a figure that is 3 or more points weaker, 2 points for a figure that is 2 points weaker and 3 points for a figure that is only 1 point weaker. Most doors can accommodate only two pushers at one time, but exceptions might occur.

Example: A treasure room door is stuck (not locked) and has a strength of 19. Two characters wish to open it. One has a strength of 17, the other 15. The base strength is 17. Add 2 because the helper is two points weaker, for an effective combined strength of 19. Thus, the difference in strengths is now 0, and the two adventurers have an 85% chance to open the stuck/heavy door on the first shot.

Naturally, doors might have bars, locks, latches, hooks, etc., to strengthen them. Further, they might be magically *held* or *wizard locked*. It is still possible to overcome these closures by physical strength without having to bash the door down. Add the following strength factors to a door that is secured in any of the following ways:

- Single wooden bar: 1-4 (d4);
- Double wooden bar: 3-9 (2d4+1);
- Single iron bar: 3-8 (d6+2);
- Latch: 1-4 (d4);
- Padlock: 3-10 (d8+2);
- Bolt: 2-7 (d6+1);
- Bolt and lock: 3-9 (2d4+1);
- Hold Portal spell: 12 (constant);
- Wizard Lock: 12 (constant).

Other types of securing can be devised, of course. If the above treasure room door were barred and bolted shut, the door would have a strength of from 22 to 30! The two figures we mentioned could not budge it, since it is three points stronger (at least) than their effective total strength for this purpose.

Wooden doors, and some metal doors, can be broken down by bashing, chopping and hammering. A wooden door can withstand a number of points of damage equal to its physical strength. Metal doors, *held* doors and *Wizard Locked* doors can absorb from 5 to 20 more points of damage than their strength, depending upon the thickness of the door. Some metal doors might be unbreakable even after continued bashing — this would be defined in the design.

Thus, the given treasure room door, if constructed of wood, could take 22 to 30 points of damage. We'll assign it a strength of 28. Characters would now strike at it with bashing, chopping and banging weapons until the door has taken 28 points of damage — at which point it will break. A character need not roll "to hit." He/she simply swings the weapon, clobbers the door, and gains his/her full strength bonus to damage, if any. Doors are considered as large opponents if they are larger than 30 square feet in surface area. Note that exceptional strength (18/01 to 18/00) benefits the breaking of doors, but not the mere shouldering of doors.

Knock, knock: A knock spell, as per its description, will negate two forms of securing. Always eliminate the weakest security device first. A knock cannot lift a portcullis, but a levitate spell might be able to do so. A knock can drop a drawbridge only if cast directly at the mechanism that opens and closes the draw-

bridge. Finally, knock is not silence, and incidental noise can easily arise from numerous causes.

Doors of physical strength 50 or greater (after being locked and secured) should be the top reasonable limit, though a DM could well design a door that cannot be broken by usual means. However, such a door should never be found in a player character's stronghold.

Magical traps and closures

Players will try to *wizard lock* every door, put a *glyph* in every corridor, put *magic mouths* in each room, etc. Such a load of magic would make a thief's hair turn white if he tried to break in. Further, players would object if a DM designed such a dungeon/castle for them to enter. A means of limiting the use of such spells is to allow only a specific number of them to be operating per 1,000 square feet. Excess use of such spells will allow a Gate to open to another plane of existence, with all of the attendant problems that will involve. Details on this process were described in *Leomund's Tiny Hut* in DRAGON #42.

Teleporters

Every new castle builder would like to include a teleport mechanism in the design. However, being able to cast the spell *teleport* is not enough to manufacture such a portal.

The formula is as follows: Secure a large gem of at least 10,000 gp value. Throw *Enchant an Item* on it to make it receptive. Now cast *teleport*, *magic mouth*, and *permanency*. Such a magic gem can then be placed in a throne, under a floor (no more than 12 real inches of non-metallic covering), or in some other secure, solid place.

Now a second gem must be magicked in the same way! After all, a teleporter only functions if it has a place to go. Such a teleporter would be usable at the same chance for error as a place "studied carefully," i.e., a 4% chance of teleporting high and a 2% chance of teleporting low.

The gems used to mark the teleport points can be as far apart (in feet) as the gold-piece value of the lesser gem divided by 10. For example, if one gem is worth 20,000 gp and the other 30,000 gp, the gems could be as far as $20,000/10 = 2,000$ feet apart. A *Limited wish* must be uttered to "join" two gems so they can be used for teleporting purposes. If either gem is moved more than

one foot, the teleporter will not function again until a new *Limited wish* is cast upon the pair. A full *Wish* can link up to six gems, any two of which can be as far apart as 1/3 the value of the least expensive gem (expressed in feet, as above). The *magic mouth* cast upon the gems during the preparation will specify the word or phrase that must be used to activate the teleporter. If the teleporter is to work by thought only, then an *ESP* spell is used instead of *magic mouth*.

Teleporters have a "reset" time and a usability factor (number of times usable per day or week). The more expensive a gem, the more often it can be used and the faster it will reset:

Gem value	Usable	Will reset to be used again in
Under 20,000 gp	Seven times/week	One hour
20,000 to 49,000 gp	Ten times/week	Two turns
50,000 to 99,000 gp	Seven times/week	Two turns
100,000+ gp	Twelve times/day	One turn

The *Wish* or *Limited wish* binds two teleport gems together, and moving one or both or destroying one or both can release great power. The results of moving/destroying a gem are:

01-50% — Release of an explosion dealing 1-4 points of damage per 10,000 gp value of the gem to each character within 50 feet of the gem when it is moved/destroyed. The gem is fragmented so that the remaining pieces are 1/20 of the gold-piece value of the original.

51-80% — Teleportation to the site of the other gem (random destination if multiple gems) but the figure will arrive stunned for 2-8 rounds with no saving throw allowed.

81-95% — Figure must make a saving throw or go insane.

96-00% — Gem destroyed/moved with no ill effects.

Dispel magic thrown on a gem used in a teleporter in an attempt to render it useless will have the same effect as any other type of attempt to damage or move it. A full *Wish* used for such an attempt allows the figure to add 45% to his/her die roll in the above procedure.

Teleporters can also be built specifically for use by characters or creatures of a particular alignment, class or ability. If this is the case, *Know alignment* or *Locate object* must also be cast when the gems are originally magicked.

How to give disease a fighting chance

by Matt Thomas

One of the most frustrating things for a DM to cope with is the fact that natural disease can so easily be overcome by characters once they run into a fifth-level cleric with his all-powerful *Cure Disease* spell. What's the use of spending all that time rolling to see whether someone contracts a disease, only to have the neighborhood cleric neutralize everything with a single, simple spell casting?

One way of making disease-curing clerics less powerful is to allow only clerics of a certain level to cure certain diseases. The chart below lists the diseases named on page 19 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, divides them into types of severity, and assigns a number to each type which represents the minimum level a cleric must hold before being able to cure it.

"Terminal strain" varieties of many diseases are introduced on the chart. "Terminal A strain" is a normal terminal pathogen, but "Terminal B strain" is much more potent and highly deadly. A "B" strain terminal disease occurs on a 1 in 8 chance after the disease has been determined as a terminal case.

Cures for all but Terminal "B" strain diseases cost 100 gp times the number on the chart. Terminal "B" strain cures are twice as expensive as other cures.

Note: Definitions of headings on the chart are as follows: MA=mild acute case; MC=mild chronic; SA=severe acute;

SC=severe chronic; T(A)=Terminal A; and T(B)=Terminal B.								
Disease	MA	MC	SA	SC	T(A)	T(B)		
Blood/blood forming organs	9	10	10	11	12	13		
Bones	10	11	12	13	14	15		
Brain/nervous system	9	10	10	11	12	13		
Cardiovascular-renal	10	10	11	12	13	14		
Connective tissue	10	11	12	13	14	15		
Ears	6	6	7	8	8	9		
Eyes	6	6	7	8	8	9		
Gastro-intestinal	6	6	7	8	8	9		
Generative organs	8	8	9	9	10	11		
Joints	6	6	7	8	-	-		
Mucous membranes	5	5	5	5	-	-		
Muscles	6	6	7	8	8	9		
Nose-throat	7	7	8	9	9	10		
Respiratory system	5	5	5	6	-	-		
Skin	6	6	7	8	8	9		
Urinary system	7	7	8	9	9	10		
Parasites:								
Cardiovascular	6	6	7	8	8	9		
Intestines	9	10	10	11	12	13		
Muscles	8	8	9	9	10	11		
Respiratory system	10	11	12	13	14	15		
Skin/hair	10	10	11	12	13	14		
Stomach	5	5	5	5	-	-		

The WAYS of the TRIFFIDS

by Mark Nuiver

FREQUENCY: *Rare*
 NO. APPEARING: 1-12 (40-400 can surround an inhabited keep, castle, or walled village over a span of one week)
 ARMOR CLASS: 7
 MOVE: 3"
 HIT DICE: 6
 % IN LAIR: *Nil*
 TREASURE TYPE: *Nil*
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-3
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Poison sting*
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Hide in vegetation*
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
 INTELLIGENCE: *Low*
 ALIGNMENT: *Neutral (evil)*
 SIZE: *S to L*
 PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

Triffids are mobile, carnivorous, and intelligent plants. Their origin is unknown, but they are not natural creatures.

Triffids are dangerous for a number of reasons. They will attack virtually any living creature (not undead or animated creatures like golems) fearlessly, unless threatened by fire, which they avoid.

They can conceal themselves in vegetation so as to be unseen with a 94% probability (6% chance of detection), thus nearly always gaining surprise. A druid has an additional 2% chance per level of noting concealed triffids, but unless he has been exposed to them before he will not be aware of their dangerous qualities. Adjust probability of detecting, allowing for vegetation as follows: Thin growth, +10%; moderate growth, no modification; thick growth, -5%.

The third danger triffids present is their poisonous stinger. This stinger remains rolled up atop their stems (see physical description) when not in use, and can shoot out 10 feet with great speed and accuracy. Triffids will always aim the stinger at an unprotected area of the body, usually (75%) the eyes when this is possible. If the stinger hits, it does 1-3 points of damage on impact, and two saving throws vs. poison are called for. Failing the first save means death. If the first save succeeds and the second fails, this indicates that poison did not enter the blood, but did contact the eyes (75%) or skin (25%), causing blindness in the former case and crippling injury in the latter, as well as 2-8 additional points of damage. Special damage to eyes or skin is permanent until *healed*. In addition, the victim so struck must make a successful system shock roll or become unconscious from pain for 1 turn. Making both saving throws means the stinger failed to eject any poison, although the 1-3 points of damage is still taken from the blow.

The fourth dangerous aspect of triffids is their intelligence. They are possessed



Adapted from the creature created by John Wyndham and described in his book, *THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS*. Permission to use copyrighted information was granted by Doubleday & Company, Inc., New York, N.Y.

of an extreme cunning, letting them to use their other abilities to the fullest. They will crouch concealed by a forest trail awaiting unsuspecting prey. They have no eyes, but this lack of visual organs causes no difficulty since they are extremely sensitive to sound, as well as to light and heat. In fact, they are attracted to loud noises, and a loud, continuous ruckus (e.g., melee) will soon attract all triffids within several miles.

It is known that triffids are capable of communicating with each other (see physical description). It is speculated that they possess a "communal mind" like that of the social insects. A single triffid is a cunning killer; a group of triffids is an intelligent entity that has been known to gather around small communities and "lay siege" to them, actually knocking down small barricades and fences by sheer mass, then attacking all within. Simple traps will work only once on a group of triffids before the remaining triffids grasp their meaning and determine how to thwart them. If their organs of communication are removed, triffids will gradually deteriorate and die.

Triffids' poison is much sought after by assassins, and magic—users and alchemists as well, because of its corrosive properties. If the poison merely contacts the skin it will cause 2-8 points of damage per dose (5 ml) plus crippling injury to the area struck, calling for a system shock check as described above. If the poison is swallowed, injected into the blood, or splatters into an open wound, a saving throw vs. poison must succeed or the victim will die. Mature triffids are speculated to hold about 100 ml of poison (younger triffids hold the appropriate fraction of that), enough for 20 injections before running dry, and produce 25 ml per day when their poison sacs are not filled to capacity, unless their stingers are removed. Triffids' poison sells for 125 gold pieces per dose when available. Note that this poison is an oily liquid which will simply run off a weapon blade, and thus cannot be used to envenom a weapon.

It is possible to build up an immunity to triffid poison by surviving repeated stings. Every time a character or creature survives after either contacting the poison, ingesting it, or having it injected into his blood (without resorting to a *Neutralize Poison* spell or the like), he gains a +1 (cumulative) on all subsequent saving throws versus triffids' poison. No bonus to subsequent saving throws is gained if both saving throws are made vs. the stinger in one attack, because the poison did not contact the body.

Triffids age in 8 stages, each stage representing 1 point per hit die. It takes about 3 months to grow from one stage to the next. For attack purposes, treat triffids of 1 year or younger (4 points per

hit die or less) as 6-hit-dice monsters, and all older triffids as having hit dice equal to their hit points divided by 4.5 rounded down (e.g. fully mature, 2-year-old triffids attack as 48/4.5 = 10-dice monsters). They grow about 1 foot per stage to a maximum height of 8 feet in temperate areas. In tropical locations, they mature about twice as rapidly and reach a maximum height of 10 feet. Triffids do not become mobile until the beginning of stage 5, and do not produce poison until the middle of stage 4.

Triffids reproduce in August or the equivalent month (near the end of the normal growing season in a temperate climate). The reproductive organ swells up and bursts with a "pop" which is audible from 20 yards away. Thousands of seeds are shot into the air and carried by the wind. Fortunately, only about 5% of these seeds are viable. Because triffids are very adaptable to climate and soil, the seeds will grow nearly anywhere.

Triffids have two ways of obtaining nourishment. Before they become mobile they can survive on sunlight and soil like a normal plant. Even after they can move about, triffids periodically must re-root themselves.

The cup at the end of a triffid's stem is coated with a sticky substance which attracts, entraps, and digests insects. When triffids kill larger prey, they must remain near the body until it begins to decom-

pose, at which point the stinging tendril is strong enough to rip off shreds of flesh and transfer them to the digestive cup.

Description: Triffids have a woody bole, atop which is a long stem. The bole is shaggy with little rootlet hairs and is nearly spherical except for three bluntly tapered projections extending from the lower part. When supported by these projections, the body is lifted about 1 foot off the ground. Triffids "walk" on these legs like a man on crutches: 2 legs slide forward, then the third leg slides forward almost even with the front two, and so forth. Their stems whip back and forth as the triffids clumsily move around. Their top speed is approximately that of a brisk walking pace for a human. For obvious reasons, they have difficulty negotiating stairs or rough terrain.

The stem extends above the bole to a height of up to 8 feet (or 10 feet in the tropics). At the tip of the stem is a cup- or funnel-like object which secretes a sticky digestive fluid. The poisonous stinger curls up within this cup when not in use. Below the cup is the reproductive organ. From the bole grow 3 small bare sticks, growing straight beside the stem. These sticks can beat against the stem, creating a rattling, rapid tattoo of noise through which the triffids communicate with each other. The body is covered with short sprays of leathery green leaves.

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Merchants deserve more, too

by Dennis Matheson

TRAVELLER Books 4 and 5, *Mercenary* and *High Guard*, gave players a set of expanded tables for creating Army, Marine, and Naval characters. Past issues of DRAGON™ magazine have contained new tables for the Scout and "Others" services. All of these expanded tables have the effect of putting Merchant characters at a severe disadvantage. In order to give all services equal time, the following system is presented to allow the Merchant service to compete on the same level as everyone else.

Enlistment: Enlistment is handled as in Book 1.

Terms: Each term is broken down into four years, with the actions for each year being resolved separately. The first year of the first term is used for basic and advanced training. During this time, each character chooses the Merchant branch he wishes to enter (Trader, Ship's Complement, or Support). He receives the skill Admin-1, plus one skill rolled at random from the Merchant Occupation Specialty table corresponding to the branch he chose. If the character is from a planet with a Technological Level of 12 or greater, there is a +1 DM to this roll. Once the year of basic and advanced training has been completed, the assignment resolution procedure begins normally.

General Assignment: At the start of each year, the character must determine his assignment for that year. He first rolls one die on the General Assignment Table to determine if he will be in a command or crew position. If he is already a commissioned officer, he may elect to take a -1 DM on this die roll, while if he has an Education of 8 or better, he may use a DM of +1 on this roll. A result of "Command" indicates that the character has been placed in charge of some part of the mission. "Crew"

indicates that he is simply part of the crew, with no command functions, and "Special" indicates that the character is involved in some activity outside the realm of normal merchant functions and must roll on the Special Table to determine his assignment for this year.

If a character has already been promoted to Captain, treat all "Crew" results as "Command." When a character rolls "Command" for the first time, he is automatically commissioned as a Fourth Officer, and is given the rank of 01. This reflects the fact that Merchant Captains will often make field commissions for purposes of having a leader for a landing party or trade station, and such commissions are usually honored when the ship returns to port.

Specific Assignment: After determining a general assignment, the character then rolls two dice and notes the result from the Specific Assignment table. He then proceeds to the Assignment Resolution Table.

Assignment Resolution: The first line on this table represents the number the character must equal or exceed on two dice in order to survive the assignment. The character is allowed to use a +1 DM on this roll if he has any MOS skill of level 2 or higher.

The second row under each column heading is the number that must be rolled in order to be promoted to the next rank. A character may only be promoted once per term, and may not be promoted at all until commissioned.

The last row gives the number which must be rolled in order for the character to receive a skill for that year. The character may roll for a skill on either his MOS table, or on the Merchant Life table — one of three Skill Tables provided below. If his general assignment was "Crew," a character may roll on the Crew Skills table. And, if his general assignment was "Command," he may roll on the Command Skills table.

Re-enlistment and Mustering Out: Performed as in Book 1.

Merchant Occupation Specialty Table

Die	Trader	Ship's Complement	Support
1	Brawling	Gunnery	Vehicle
2	Gambling	Jack-o-T	Steward
3	Streetwise	Vacc Suit	Mechanics
4	Bribery	Computer	Electronics
5	Forgery	Engineering	Gun Cbt
6	Admin	Navigation	Vacc Suit
7	Computer	Pilot	Admin
DM+1 if TL12+			

General Assignment Table

Die	Result	Die	Result
0	Command	5	Crew
1	Command	6	Special
2	Command	7	Special
3	Crew	DM -1 if Officer	
4	Crew	DM +1 if Education 8+	

Commissioned at rank 01 when "Command" is rolled for the first time.

Specific Assignment Table

Dice	Trader	Ship's Comp.	Support
2	Smuggling	Smuggling	Estab Rt
3	Sub Run	Sub Run	Sub Run
4	Sub Run	Sub Run	Ships Dfnce
5	Trading	Estab Rt	Psng Rn
6	Trading	Trading	Trading
7	Training	Training	Training
8	Trading	Trading	Trading
9	Estab Rt	Trading	Maint
10	Maint	Maint	Maint
11	Trading	Mail Run	Security
12	Mail Run	Ships Dfnce	Mail Run

Trading: buying and selling of cargoes.

Estab Rt: establishing a new trade route between two planets.

Sub Run: carrying subsidized cargoes.

Mail Run: carrying mail.

PsngR Run: carrying passengers.

Smuggling: carrying illegal cargoes.

Ships Dfnce: defense of ship while under attack.

Security: ship's internal security.

Assignment Resolution Table

Training Maint. Smuggle Sub Run Trading

Survival	auto	auto	7+	4+	4+
Promotion	12+	none	10+	11+	9+
Skills	6+	9+	5+	7+	7+

Estab Rt Mail Run Defence Security PsngR Run

Survival	5+	3+	6+	5+	4+
Promotion	8+	12+	7+	9+	10+
Skills	6+	8+	6+	7+	7+

Skill Tables

Die Merchant Life

- 1 Gambling
- 2 Brawling
- 3 Streetwise
- 4 +1 Str
- 5 +1 Str
- 6 +1 Dex
- 7 +1 Int
- 8 Forgery

DMs+1 if rank 04

+2 if rank 05+

Crew Skills

- Vehicle
- Gunnery
- Steward
- Mechanics
- Electronics
- Gun Cbt
- Medical

+1 if Ed 8+

Command Skills

- Ship's Boat
- Navigation
- Engineering
- Computer
- Pilot
- Jack-o-T

Special Assignment Table

Die Result

- 1 Cross Training
- 2 Trade Station
- 3 Economics School
- 4 Ship Systems School

Cross Training: The player may roll one skill from any MOS table other than his own.

Trade Station: The character has been posted to a Trade Station, and receives an automatic Admin skill.

Economics School: Roll 4+ for each of the following: Admin, Streetwise, Bribery, Forgery.

Ship Systems School: Roll 4+ for each of the following: Pilot, Navigation, Engineering, Computer, Medical.

Ship Defense School: Roll 4+ for each of the following: Gunnery, Gun Cbt, Blade Cbt, Zero-G Cbt, Vacc Suit.

Diplomatic Attache: Character assigned as diplomatic attache to another service, gets automatic promotion, and may pick next assignment (but may not pick another Diplomatic Attache assignment). Roll 1 die (ignore 5's); consult Draft column on Book 1 character generation tables to find service assignment. Character gets one skill from each of the four skill tables for that service.

Ship Command School: Roll 5+ for each of the following: Pilot, Navigation, Computer, Engineering, Medical, Streetwise, Admin, Bribery, Forgery, Ship's Boat.

Table of Ranks

01-04	Fourth Officer	Traveller Rank 1
05-06	Third Officer	Traveller Rank 2
07-08	Second Officer	Traveller Rank 3
09	First Officer	Traveller Rank 4
10	Captain	Traveller Rank 5

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SIMULATION CORNER

by John Prados

Practicing Game Design II: Building a model

"Practicing Game Design" is a five-part series offered by Simulation Corner as a contribution toward defining and making available the procedures for how to make a game. This is intended to be a detailed but non-technical discussion and to be applicable as far as possible to all types of games, not only historical boardgames.

The series draws upon the experience of professional game designers as reflected in interviews in the hobby media, the author's experience, and the commentaries of a panel of three designers who were asked to give their opinions on these subjects. The experts are Stephen Newberg of Simulations Canada; Jay Nelson, formerly of OSG and SPI and now a free-lancer; and Jack Greene, formerly a free-lance designer who has founded his own company, Quarterdeck Games. These designers have a wide range of experience, including publication of their designs by Avalon Hill and Simulations Publications, as well as almost half a dozen "third world" game companies.

In the first installment of "Practicing Game Design" the subject was choosing a topic, and we proposed ground rules to help the designer zero in on what seems to him a worthwhile game project. It is now necessary to talk about how the designer turns the idea for a game into a finished prototype playable with friends or prospective publishers. The intention is not to discuss physical creation of the prototype; that has been done better at greater length than is possible here (see Redmond Simonsen's contribution to the S&T Staff Study of 1977). The focus here is on getting the design end of the game together.

Every game involves a *model*. A game does not *do* something, it *mimics* that thing. Jim Dunnigan was right when he said in an interview long ago that "realism" in games is based on an illusion. This of course is what makes it a game, but from the standpoint of design the important question is how to get the game to mimic the reality. This is done through the medium of the model, and this conceptual model expresses the

rules which make the game system do what it does.

The model draws upon an analogy with biology: Much as the systems in the body combine to determine the behavior we observe in an organism like the human body, systems in a game combine to determine the effects of game actions as these are defined by the designer. A model is composed of a number of such sub-systems, each of which is functionally specific. That is, functions which the player is allowed to perform in the game are isolated and dealt with in rules that are comprehensive and related only to that function. Where different game functions interact, such as in a board game where a unit makes a *move* prior to having *combat* (two different functions), the interaction is specifically foreseen, defined and resolved by the rules.

To be effective, the model, or "game system," must cover all the functions relevant to the designer's topic, the game mechanics comprising each function must be clearly related to the reality they mimic, and the functions should be mutually exclusive of each other (so that rules do not overlap).

Let's make these points with concrete examples. Assume that the designer has done his research and has all the information needed for creating his model. In a role-playing game, for instance, where game action comes from the interplay of characters, the game system ("model") must provide for each of the functions (hand-to-hand combat, problem-solving, use of magic, survival ability, etc.) necessary to allow characters to "do" believable things within the confines of a reality (the "dungeon" or scenario) that is set by the gamemaster. Another function of the game system is to guide the gamemaster on what elements can be included in the "real" setting for each adventure. If each of these functions is not covered in the game system, the design fails and not even the designer's friends will want to play the game.

In the historical game, where game action comes from the interplay of historical forces as defined by the game, the specific content of "functions" may be

different but the design process is the same. Here functions would include such things as movement mechanics, logistics effects, command control effects, predominant modes of combat, different forms of military force (infantry, artillery, naval or air), weapons types, and so forth.

Since the object in historical board gaming is to simulate an actual situation, the game functions must be structured in such a way as to mimic the course of action or the type of action that actually occurred, as determined by the research the designer has conducted. Another difference from the role-playing game, in which character (force) determination is often allowed to the player, is that in the military simulation the designer must be the judge of the historical forces involved and must incorporate this information as a "given" into the game, along with the game system.

The game design, whatever the topic, must be exhaustive in its coverage of relevant variables. But "exhaustive" coverage does not mean that every relevant variable should be covered with game mechanics of considerable detail. Otherwise, the designer rapidly ends up with *Campaign for North Africa*. Exhaustive coverage means the designer has successfully identified all the relevant variables and has considered the place of each factor in his model. Some aspects should be treated explicitly as game sub-systems. Others may have to be "factored in." For reasons of excessive complexity, game size or format, yet other factors may have to be deliberately excluded. The important things are: a rationale for each decision in design evolution and maintenance of exhaustive coverage of the real situation by means of the design elements incorporated into the system.

Questions of factoring-in are very important in the creation of the model. To focus the discussion on historical games for a moment, such factoring often occurs when the designer assigns "combat strength" to forces in the game or when he decides on the combat resolution sequence in the design.

As Jay Nelson notes, "Depending on the design intent, combat strength can be a measure of absolute quantity, as in *HWTTR*, or of the relative quality of combat power, as in *Arnhemor Rommel in Tunisia*." In the latter game, designer Nelson gave absolute combat strengths to units but then filtered these through such an intricate logistics and command system ("operations points") that game actions were much more dependent on this relative quality than on the absolute strengths.

Jack Greene, who is currently designing naval games, is (perhaps understandably) more adamant about "breaking out" elements rather than factoring them in. As Jack says, "A combat factor in one of my games is usually the size of a shell, rate of fire, and then a 'feel' for what the game will say the shell hit will do."

As with anything, there is a relationship between the level and amount of detail in a game system and the difficulty which other gamers may have in playing the game or understanding its intent. "Factoring in" is a device for limiting the overall level of detail, while still enabling the designer to provide great detail in certain places where it may be appropriate for the topic he is covering. The question of when to factor in and when to break out is a crucial one, and the elegance with which this issue is tackled is often the measure of the quality of a game design. Stephen Newberg sheds some light on this question:

"In its simplest (and probably best) form, the combat factor is a quantification of the striking and defensive strength of the unit with no consideration of other offsets such as training, morale, leadership, experience, etc. These factors can then be accounted for in other sections of the game system. For simplicity, however, some or all of these factors may end up worked into the combat factor so as to come up with a single number. I don't think this is the best way to do things, but if you want to produce a fairly easy and quick game, one cannot have thirteen values requiring separate procedures for each unit. The design trick is to decide what has to be considered separately for the topic and scale while still maintaining that 'realistic' feel . . . and then finding a system to quantify the rest into one or two numbers."

Given all this, let's concede for the purpose of this discussion that some factoring *has* to be done in your game. How do you tell when to and when not to?

Sorry, there's no easy answer. But there is a very good ground rule to use: In the previous installment of this series it was suggested that the prospective designer compile a list of the elements he finds interesting about a situation, as a means of narrowing down the topic for his game design. That same list of elements can now serve for the "ballpark"

on factoring: When in doubt, treat separately any game function directly related to the topic elements of interest. By contrast, factor in specific functions whenever the element of interest is not obvious. It was also suggested that the prospective designer compile a list of things he wanted to avoid. Anything on a list of this kind *should* be factored in, unless the game would not accurately mimic reality without it. Does that sound easy? Try it!

Simulation Corner asked the expert panelists whether they felt game design to be an art or a science. The answers here are interesting. Again, the most detailed commentary is that of Stephen Newberg —although he restricts his remarks to the historical side of the hobby. Newberg, a Canadian who studied and trained to become an engineer, points out that:

" . . . in the final analysis, history is the personal view of events of the historian, no matter the amount of modern technology and attempted objectivity he brings to the work. Similarly, historic game design is art. The designer and development team can bring to bear all the same abilities as the historian when producing the design, but their results remain opinion and personal view. Without hard data and duplicative results from independent groups you cannot classify something as science.

"This should not be considered negative, however. I am a firm believer in progressive science — but where there is no art or opinion resulting from differing views and communications between individuals, inhumanity lurks in the wings."

Californian Jack Greene, for his part, thinks that game design is both: a science in the determination of functionally specific game-system elements, and "an art in melding the numbers and the facts..."

New York free-lancer Jay Nelson emphasizes the awesome character of "art" and says rather that design is a craft: "Certainly one can become inspired in the execution of one's craft, but, if not, the simple execution of craft should suf-

fice. On the other hand, that sometimes makes for dull games."

There's certainly a kernel of truth in Jay's mention of the craft aspect of design. It is skill in making design decisions that is the mark of craftsmanship, and that skill is the result of practice. It is a measure of such craftsmanship that some gamers will readily play any design offered by some designers, or avoid any from some other ones.

In the final analysis, building the model is only a means to an end —the completed game. Moreover, model-building cannot be an unfocused activity if the game is going to accurately portray some situation. There is a need to aim the game system at modeling some set of specific elements that the designer has determined are important.

It is through this kind of focused design effort that a game attains that quasi-mystical objective, "realism." It is toward this objective that most designers aspire. In the next installment of "Practicing Game Design," *Simulation Corner* will turn precisely to this question of designing for "realism." Comments on any aspect of this series are invited.

For further reading:

Strategy & Tactics Magazine Staff, *War-game Design*. S&T Staff Study No. 2. Simulations Publications, 1977.

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THIEVE'S WORLD.

Junta needs more instability

by G. Arthur Rahman

One of the most intriguing wargames in this writer's experience is Creative Wargames Workshop's *JUNTA*. Players take the role of powerful families in a corrupt Third World republic. Ideally, these factions strive for the presidency, attempt to loot the treasury and, eventually, win the game. Out-of-power players maneuver to start a Coup to oust the President and seize his office. Street fighting and firing squads follow.

Unfortunately, very few Coups ever seem to occur in *Junta*. The President can do very little treasury-looting or tyrannizing before assassination or the fear of it forces him out of office. With no definite target for a Coup, the country remains relatively stable. Moreover, the player who would like to shake things up seldom has enough force available to do it.

The problems of *Junta* are twofold: First, the President is too vulnerable; he cannot remain in power long enough to drive his opponents into desperate revolt. The office of the presidency is more of a curse than a blessing, and one usually votes his worst enemy into it.

Second, there are too many restrictions on raising revolutionary forces. A player seldom has the rare combination of cards needed to bring any auxiliary forces into play. Able to count on nothing more than his own small army brigade, he is dubious about starting a coup.

Clearly, the power of the presidency must be strengthened; just as importantly, the capabilities of the rebel faction must be enhanced to favor the player who is bold and rebellious. With these objectives in mind, the following variant rules are offered:

Assassination: The President may not be assassinated by the Minister at the bank. Nor can the President go to the bank in any two consecutive game turns.

This change neutralizes the treachery of the President's most dangerous enemy, the Minister, who controls the deadly secret police. Without a good chance to assassinate the President, the Minister is more likely to cooperate with him, providing he gets decent payoffs. In return, the President will usually give the office of Minister to the player with the most votes. Reasonably safe from assassination, the President-Minister team will merrily loot the treasury in flagrant defiance of the opposition party.

Event Cards: It is no longer necessary to have an Event Card-Influence Card

combination to recruit and control armed and unarmed rebel forces (rioters, strikers, the Home Defense League, the Bank Guards, the Christian Defense Association, the Peasant Rebellion card and the Pretender card). However, should these forces be brought into play via an Event Card alone, any player who displays the proper Influence Card may, at any time, seize full control of the units. Having taken control, the player may not only move and attack with the units, but even remove them from the map.

This rule provides for unexpected shifts of power in the larger context of combating the formidable President-Minister combination. Even the President may raise units, which will fight in defense of his beloved paternalistic regime.

The two rules given above make the Presidency a valuable asset and the Coup a possibility to be feared. Two powerful factions on a collision course will make for livelier action.

Chronic Disorder: The subject simulated by *Junta* inspires other rules that enhance action and realism. Third World countries are often plagued by ongoing dissent, continual street demonstrations and terroristic acts, short of, but building toward, a full-scale uprising. In recent years, chronic disorders have brought down governments in Iran and Nicaragua, to name just a couple of examples.

To simulate this noisy discontent, a new rule makes it possible to recruit and deploy rioters and strikers, as in the variant rules above, but without initiating an actual Coup. Simply deploy the rioters or strikers and *do not move them*. At the end of each subsequent turn in which a rioter or striker remains on the map, one more unit of the same type is deployed in its proper section of the city. This simulates spreading discontent in the face of government weakness or unpopularity. If not dealt with by the presidential faction, the forces of anarchy will grow up to the limit of the countermix (Note: All eliminated units are returned to the countermix).

Any played Event Cards are put in the discard deck, but the recruited units remain in control of the person who played it, unless a player displaying an appropriate Influence Card usurps their direction. All rioters and strikers are removed from the map at the end of a Coup.

In this variant, the General Strike Event Card becomes an awesome force for the one who plays it (or usurps control of it by displaying the Labor Union and Socialist or Radical Influence Cards). It enables the player to take control of all

the rioters and strikers on the map, as well as to evoke any listed type that is not on the map when the card is played. However, playing the General Strike automatically initiates a Coup.

The President has two ways to deal with discontent: bribery and/or force.

Immediately following the Assassination Phase of a game turn, the President may attempt to bribe one or more types of anarchic forces (Student Rioters, Slum Rioters and Dock Strikers). Each bribe toward each type is paid and resolved separately. If the bribe succeeds, the bribed unit type is removed from the map. Whether the bribe succeeds or fails, the money the President paid is lost to a discard pile.

To attempt to bribe, discard your bribe money and roll a die:

BP's paid in bribes	Remove bribed dissidents on a roll of:
1 BP	6
2 BP	5,6
3 BP	4,5,6
4 BP	3,4,5,6
5 BP	2,3,4,5,6
6 BP	Automatically bribed

To end dissidence by force, the President may initiate a Dissidence Suppression Sequence (played similarly to a Coup Sequence) of seven phases. During Dissidence Suppression, only the President's Guards and/or the Minister's Police Units may move. During Dissidence Suppression, only rioters and strikers may be attacked.

Should any unit other than Guards or Police be moved, the Dissidence Suppression Sequence is aborted and a Coup begins (at Coup Phase One). Rioters and strikers may, however, fight combat against Guards and Police in their area of the city.

If the Minister has been ordered by the President to suppress dissidence and the Guards and/or Police have not eliminated all the anarchic units by the end of the seventh phase, the President may (but doesn't have to) send the Minister to the firing squad.

A President may not initiate a dissident movement against his own government.

Logical Political Influence: For the sake of logic, a fourth variant rule is offered. The Influence Cards in column A may not be displayed in the same player's hand as those in column B.

A	B
The Church	Labor Union
Conservatives	Radicals
Monarchists	Socialists



The forest, now in shadow, would soon be black with night. The wanderer, weary from her plight, anxiously searched for a resting ground, unaware that the "CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT" lurked nearby. The unexplained screams of doom and dread came upon her, without warning. The terror of the night was unfolding . . .

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
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| 13-002 Hill Giant | 13-010 Insect Men Warriors |
| 13-003 Trolls (set 1) | 13-011 Lesser Demons |
| 13-004 Small Carnosaurs (set 1) | 13-012 Manticore |
| 13-005 Megalosaurus | 13-013 Were Creatures |
| 13-006 Monoclonius Agathaumas | 13-014 Slimes and Jellies |
| 13-007 Victims | 13-015 Thieves |
| 13-008 Vampire Lord Set | 13-016 Shadow Elf Sorcerors |

The "Children of the Night" have been turned loose on the world. They're lurking at your local adventure gaming store.

THE ELECTRIC EYE

COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY AND TERMINOLOGY

by Mark Herro

In the course of doing research for various columns, many little bits of information often come to the attention of *The Electric Eye*. While these items are too short to mention individually, they have grown into a collection altogether large enough to deserve presentation here. Hence, here follows the first edition of "Random Comments."

One of the most frequent observations about the recent movie *Dragonslayer* is how *natural* the dragon's movements appear, especially while walking. This fluidity is due to a new animation technique which uses an Apple II computer. The technique, called *Go/Mo*, uses the computer to control both the dragon-model's limbs and the motor of the camera controller.

In traditional animation techniques, each minute movement of a model is painstakingly performed by hand, then a few frames of film are shot. The process

is extremely time-consuming and often looks "forced" or faked if not done just right. Often, days of work will result in just a few seconds' worth of usable film.

With *Go/Mo*, the computer easily produces and reproduces the model's movements and the camera actions. This not only eliminates the tedious hand adjustments, but also produces a very believable *blurred* motion on film.

Sinclair Research, home of the folks who make the ZX80 computer, will soon be selling a new flat-screen TV set, about the size of a book. The three-inch, black-and-white screen has its picture tube mounted sideways. It will sell in the \$125 to \$150 range; the U.S. release date is said to be about this time next year.

Speaking of Sinclair and the ZX80, that computer is being replaced by the ZX81. The ZX81 features a flicker-free video output (at the expense of slower speed — this mode may be bypassed for high-speed applications) and an 8K, floating-point BASIC. Thanks to a cus-

tom-made IC, the ZX81 has a grand total of only four IC's — including 1K of RAM (expandable to 16K) and a 280 CPU. The combination of a ZX81 and the new flat-screen TV could make a very interesting (and powerful) portable computer.

My face is red

Several "typos" crept into both of the programs listed in DRAGON™ #49. Two minor corrections to the BASIC time-keeping program are: changing the colon to a semicolon in line 11; and changing the 13 to an 11 in line 13.

The corrections to the calculator program are a bit more important:


Under LBL E', change x=t to x "exchange" t (two opposite-pointing arrows) and insert a "=" sign between RCL 10 and STO 0;

Under LBL D', insert a "=" sign between RCL 10 and STO 1;

Under LBL C', change x=t to x "exchange" t, as above, and insert a "=" sign between RCL 12 and STO 2.

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Convention schedule

DRAGONFLIGHT, Sept. 11-13 — Sponsored by the Brass Dragon Society, P.O. Box 33872, Seattle WA 98153. The convention will feature role-playing tournaments, miniatures battles, a DM seminar, painting competitions, and a dealer area. Other activities will include the annual riddle competition, contests for designing tricks, traps, rooms and monsters, and SCA demonstrations. The largest gaming convention in the Northwest, upwards of 1,000 persons are expected to attend. More information is available from the Brass Dragon Society at the above address.

COPPER CON, Sept. 11-13 — This new convention, to be held at Howard Johnson's, Caravan Inn, 3333 E. Van Buren Street, Phoenix, Ariz., will feature science-fiction, fantasy and war gaming. RAW Games, one of Arizona's larger simulation game clubs, will manage the war gaming portion of the convention. Special guests will be Marion Aimmer Bradley, of Darkover fame, and Ken St. Andre, author of Tunnels & Trolls. Other activities will include an art show, dealer's room, panels, demonstrations, parties, table top F.R.P., video games, miniatures trading, a war gaming tournaments banquet and more. Tickets are \$10 until July 15, then \$12.50. For more information write to Copper Con, P.O. Box 11743, Phoenix AZ 85061 or call (602) 834-2543.

BABEL CONFERENCE '81, Sept. 25-27 — The third running of this Star Trek/science fiction/fantasy convention will take place at the Holiday Inn East, 3333 28th Street, SE, Grand Rapids MI 49506. Tentative plans include an art show, a marathon film festival, and several seminars and panel discussions. Persons wishing to participate in or help organize such events should indicate their desire when first corresponding with BabelCon officials. Registration costs are \$15 for a three-day membership,

\$6 for a one-day membership, and \$8 for a supporting membership. To register or request more information, write to Steve Harrison, BabelCon '81, 1355 Cornell SE, Grand Rapids MI 49506.

URCON III, Sept. 25-27 — Dr. Isaac Asimov and L. Sprague de Camp will appear at URCON, a simulation gaming and science-fiction convention scheduled for the University of Rochester in Rochester, NY. Tickets are \$8 until Aug. 1; \$10 before Sept. 24; \$12 at the door. Single-day tickets are \$6. For more information, write to URCON, Box 6647 River Station, Rochester NY 14627.

FALLCON, Oct. 9-11 — To be held at the Dunham Community Center, 4400 Guerley Road, Cincinnati, Ohio. Events will include miniature re-creation, historical, fantasy and science-fiction adventure gaming. For more information contact FALLCON, P.O. Box 24209, Cincinnati OH 45224.

SUNCOAST SKIRMISHES '81, Oct. 10-11 — To be held at the University of South Florida in Tampa, sponsored by the Leviathan Wargaming Federation. All types of gaming competitions and seminars are scheduled. Duke Seifried of Heritage USA will be a special guest. More information is available by writing to Suncoast Skirmishes '81, P.O. Box 40123, St. Petersburg FL 33743, phone (weekends only) (813) 345-3321.

RHEIN CON, Oct. 10-12 — The Sixth Annual Rhein Convention will be held at the Hainerberg Middle School in Wiesbaden, West Germany. Tournaments will be conducted in various board games, miniatures, and role-playing games. A small registration fee (under \$5) is payable at the door. For more information, contact CPT Jody Sherrill at 06332-6255 or SSG Gary Brode at 222L-7697/7694.

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The Oracle

(From page 76)

tion uses the examination of the livers of lower animals to determine the fortune of characters. The chance of success is adjusted according to the size and physiological complexity of the animals used — but in no case may any creature of higher than animal intelligence be used. Birds and fish may be used at -25% to the chance of success, small animals and monsters at -15%, man-sized animals and monsters (as well as sheep and goats) with no adjustment, and large

animals and monsters at +15%. Animals or monsters who are examined must be killed by the oracle just before attempting the divination; creatures already dead may be used, but at -70% to the chance of success.

Meteoromancy: The study of meteors by an oracle may foretell the favor of a god, the fortune of a character, or the occurrence of an important event. This method of divination allows the oracle to know not only which of these omens the sighted meteors represent, but (with a small degree of accuracy) what the event, fortune, or disposition is. In any case, the

oracle must spend a week studying the skies before he may make the divination.

Ornithomancy: This method of divination allows the oracle to determine whether a character's fortune in the coming week will be good or bad. The oracle must spend a day studying the movements of birds before attempting a prediction.

Hydromancy: Except that the oracle must spend a day studying the movements and currents in running water or the tides, this method of divination is the same as ornithomancy.

Hieromancy: This is a divination of fortune, or of the favor of a god, through the study of holy objects. If the oracle making the divination is of the faith to which the object studied is holy, there is an additional 10% to the chance of success.

Ophiomancy: This is divination through the study of serpents — that is, snakes — of any type (lizards, dragons, and other reptiles are excluded). After a day of study, the oracle may make a prediction about the fortune of a character for the coming week.

Pyromancy: This is divination through fire. An oracle will be able to make a prediction about the fortune of a character for the next week after studying the flames of a fire for an hour. The chance of success is adjusted according to the size and nature of the fire. A small flame, such as a candle, allows the oracle to divine at -10%, while a normal fire is unadjusted, and a large fire (such as a pyre or a burning building) gives +25%. If dung is cast into the flames, there is a -5% to the chance of success, but if incense is burned, there is a +10% chance.

Botanomancy: This is a form of divination through the study of plants. After a day of studying living plants, the oracle may make a prediction about the fortune of a character during the next week. If botanomancy is combined with a *Speak with Plants* spell, the chance of successful divination is increased by 50%.

Another method of botanomancy, similar to belomancy, involves the writing of answers to a question on the leaves of a plant. The oracle then cuts these leaves free and exposes them to the wind. If the divination is successful, and the correct answer is among those submitted, the wind will blow away all leaf-answers but the correct one. If the divination is unsuccessful, no answers will be left behind by the wind, and those blown away will be irretrievable. Note that in this second method of botanomancy, the *Speak with Plants* spell will not change the chance of success.

Astromancy and Horoscopy: These two methods of divination are essentially the same, the former being a study of the stars and the latter a study of star charts. They allow an oracle to determine the fortune of a character for the next week, and with fair accuracy the type of events

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that will befall him. In both cases, a full night of study by the oracle is required in order for the divination to have a chance of being successful.

Oneirocritica: This is a divination made through the interpretation of dreams and visions. After a night of successful dreaming, an oracle may predict an event that will happen in the next two days, with fair accuracy. The chance for success roll indicates both that a dream or vision was had by the oracle, and that it was interpreted correctly. If a character relates a dream or vision to an oracle with oneirocritical ability, there is a basic chance of 10% plus 5% per experience level of the oracle that it will be interpreted correctly. Events of the past and present may also be divined this way; the chance of an event dreamed being in the future is 85%, the chance of it being in the past is 10%, and in the present, 5%.

Lithomancy: This is a method of determining the fortune of a character, or the nature (good or evil) or fortune of a different person or place. The oracle will cast down a number of pebbles and then study the patterns formed by them. Similar to lithomancy is geomancy, in which dots are drawn randomly on a scrap of paper and the patterns then read by the oracle. Geomancy also allows the oracle to divine things by reading the patterns in cracks in the ground.

Dactylomancy: This method of divination

involves the use of a device similar to a Ouija board. The character requiring knowledge asks the oracle a question, and the answer is spelled out by a finger-ring suspended over a ring of alphabetic letters. The answer will likely be cryptic, but occasionally, as in the case of a name or a simple affirmation, the answer will be concise and clear. A lack of success in the divination is indicated by a lack of movement by the ring. A question may be asked only once; if the divination fails for that question no answer may ever be determined, even if the question is reworded.

Haruspicy: This method of divination is almost the same as hepatoscopy, except that it is more precise, telling in fair detail what the major events of the next two days will be (death, for example, or a complete loss of money), if any major events will occur, and may only be performed with the entrails of non-intelligent animals and monsters of 6 or more hit dice. The entrails of the victim are cut out and cast randomly on the ground, and the twistings and patterns formed by them are studied by the oracle. Animals not killed by the oracle himself may be used, but at a penalty of -50% to the chance of success.

Sciomancy: Similar to the *Speak with Dead* spell, this method of divination allows the oracle to determine the truth about an event in the past or present, by

speaking with the spirit (the body need not be present) of a deceased character. Only one event may be discussed, although as many questions may be asked of the spirit as are necessary to clarify the answer.

Catoptromancy: This is divination by means of reflections and mirrors. Events of the past (60% of the time), present (15%) or future (25%) may be divined precisely by the oracle after an hour of mirror-gazing. Random events are reflected in the mirror for the oracle to see. Silver mirrors allow a +10% bonus to the chance of success when depicting events involving death.

Licanomancy: This is the ability of divination through the study of reflections in a vessel of still water. A drop of oil may be added and the resulting patterns studied; this is called scyphomancy. Or, the motions and figures in a pot of molten lead may be studied also; this is called molybdomancy. The oracle, after an hour of study, is able to make an accurate divination of an event occurring in the past, present, or future, which he is able to specify 20% of the time. The use of either holy or unholy water will give +10% to the chance of success. Events seen in holy water tend to be pleasant, and those seen in unholy water tend to be dire.

Gastromancy: This ability is divination through the observation of figures in

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sealed glass jars. Two sets of these jars exist; one is in the possession of the single oracle, and one in the possession of the Great Oracle. The five jars of each set are cobalt blue in color and vary in height from two inches to two feet. A specific event of the past, present, or future may be requested by the oracle, and 50% of the time, this will be the one depicted. Otherwise, the event shown will be random. If the divination is unsuccessful, the jars will remain empty, but if a successful divination is made, a series of cryptic figures and depictions will appear in the jars. The jars themselves are not magical.

Crystallomancy: By this method, the Great Oracle is able to divine, with only a 5% chance of failure, any event occurring in the past, present, or future. This event may be chosen by the oracle 80% of the time; otherwise it will be random. The oracle consults a crystal globe (which is non-magical), and sees in it a series of figures, or depictions of people and events, which he may then interpret to make a divination.

General guidelines on divination

Innate abilities are available to an oracle whenever the proper equipment and/or materials are present.

The die roll made for each divination indicates only whether or not the oracle was able to get a clear impression, and does not guarantee the absolute accuracy of that impression. If a divination is found to be unsuccessful, then the oracle was unable to receive any impression about the question posed him; however, he will require payment in return for even a failed attempt.

The accuracy of a prediction depends more upon the experience level of the oracle involved than on the method used to make it. Thus, predictions made by higher-level oracles will tend to be more precise than those made by low-level oracles, even in the case of a simple reading of a fortune. Higher-level oracles will be relatively more specific in their divinations when the attempts succeed.

It should be noted, though, that divinations made by any oracle to be a little difficult to understand, or at least should be able to be interpreted in several ways, so that player characters are not able to take advantage of the oracle to know with great precision and accuracy what will happen in a campaign. An element of mystery should be maintained, and so oracles ought to respond in verse or in generalities rather than in straightforward terms. Players should have to interpret the words of the oracle in order to benefit from them.

On the other hand, predictions of the future that are correct (such as the death of a character, if such is indicated), should always come true. Even if a character takes precautions against a prediction,

it should still occur. Once an oracle makes a prediction that the DM and the dice say is true, it happens. Similarly, events of the present and past must have taken place, if they were described correctly by an oracle.

In cases where the oracle receives visions and impressions of things that he did not request (especially among the higher-level abilities), the origin of those impressions will be unknown to the oracle. That is, he may request to know about the death of a certain character in the future, but if he receives impressions of an earthquake instead, he will not know whether the earthquake occurred in the past, is now occurring, or will occur in the future, or where it will take place. Such events should be created randomly by the DM, and may in fact be events that have already occurred to the character requesting knowledge from the oracle. In any case, they should not be events of any great importance to the campaign, lest they disturb the balance of the game.

Furthermore, if the revealing of certain information would tend to badly unbalance the game and lessen the enjoyment of the players, the DM should not let the information out, despite what the dice may tell him.

The price that an oracle will ask for a divination is high, and costs increase as the level of ability increases. Usually, the price asked will be 100 gp times the level of the ability squared, plus or minus a little according to the wishes of the DM. Thus, a simple dowsing for water would cost 100 gold pieces ($100 \times (1^2) = 100$), while a gastronomic prediction might cost around 22,500 gold pieces ($100 \times (15^2) = 22,500$).

Spell casting by oracles

Oracles have the ability to cast both divination magics and some necromantic spells. These they acquire through meditation, in the same way that clerics and druids recover their spells, although all of their spells do exist in a written form.

The prices that an oracle will charge for spell casting will be the same as those charged by any other class of spellcaster for the same activity. For example, the DMG outlines on page 103 and 104 some suggested prices for clerical spells; oracular spell prices will be in this range.

Spells unique to the oracle class are described after the spell list which follows, and spells taken from the Players are referenced according to the level and class which apply.

Spells usable by class and level, oracles:

Oracular	Spell level					
Level	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1					
2	2					
3	2	1				
4	3	2				
5	3	3	1			
6	4	3	2			
7	4	4	2	1		
8	5	4	3	2		
9	5	5	3	2	1	
10	6	5	4	3	2	
11	6	6	4	3	2	
12	7	6	5	4	3	1
13	7	7	5	4	3	2
14	7	7	6	5	4	3
15	7	7	6	5	4	4
16	7	7	7	6	5	5

Oracular spells		
1st level	2nd level	3rd level
Detect Evil	Augury	Animate Dead
2 Detect Illusion	Cure Light Wounds	Clairaudience
3 Detect invisibility	Detect Charm	Clairvoyance
4 Detect Lie	Detect Poison	Divine Truth
5 Detect Magic	ESP	Feign Death
6 Detect Snares and Pits	Find Traps	Metal and Mineral Detection
7 Identify	Guidance	Speak with Animals
8 Know Alignment	Know Languages	Speak with Dead
9 Locate Animals	Locate Object	Sympathetic Magic I
10 Predict Weather	Locate Plants	Tongues
11 Read Languages	Omen I	
12 Read Magic	Slow Poison	
4th level	5th level	6th level
1 Commune with Nature	Commune	Contact Other Plane
2 Divination	Cure Critical Wounds	Divine Future
3 Divine Past	Divine Present	Heal
4 Omen II	Legend Lore	Memory
5 Speak with Plants	Hide	Omen III
6 Stone Tell	Speak with Monsters	Raise Dead
7 Vision	Sympathetic Magic II	Reincarnate
8 Wizard Eye	True Seeing	Seek

Spell descriptions

First level

Detect Evil: Same as 1st level cleric spell.

Detect Illusion: Same as 1st level illusionist spell.

Detect Invisibility: 1st level illusionist spell.

Detect Lie: 4th level cleric spell.

Detect Magic: 1st level magic-user spell.

Detect Snares and Pits: 1st level druid spell.

Identify: 1st level magic-user spell.

Know Alignment: 2nd level cleric spell.

Locate Animals: 1st level druid spell.

Predict Weather: 1st level druid spell.

Read Languages: This spell is essentially the same as the thief ability. The caster is able to read any language for the duration of the spell (5 rounds/level), excepting magical languages. He is not able to write the language, though, or speak it.

Read Magic: 1st level magic-user spell.

Second level

Augury: 2nd level clerical spell.

Cure Light Wounds: 1st level cleric spell.

Detect Charm: 2nd level cleric spell.

Detect Poison: This spell will detect the presence of a poison or venom on or in any item, if such substance is present. The caster must touch the item on which the spell is being cast in order to detect the venom. Note that the spell provides no immunity to the poison, and a save vs. poison must be made as usual if contact poison is touched.

ESP: 2nd level magic-user spell.

Find Traps: 2nd level cleric spell.

Guidance: This spell answers simple questions concerning the fortune of a character or party. One general question may be asked, and the caster will intuitively know the answer. The questions asked should not be specific, but of the "Will we be alive tomorrow?" or "Will we be rich if we survive this adventure?" type. The spell may be cast once per day.

Know Languages: This spell expands on the Read Languages spell, allowing the caster to understand spoken language as well. It still does not allow him to communicate in that language, though, or to understand magical languages. The spell lasts for 3 rounds/level.

Locate Object: 2nd level magic-user spell.

Locate Plants: 2nd level druid spell.

Omen I: This spell simply allows the caster a greater chance of success when making a divination through one of his innate abilities. This extra chance is 10%. Theoretically, speaking this spell increases the caster's ability to see and interpret correctly the various omens in his divination.

Slow Poison: 2nd level cleric spell.

Third level

Animate Dead: 3rd level cleric spell.

Clairaudience: 3rd level magic-user spell.

Clairvoyance: 3rd level magic-user spell.

Divine Truth: This spell allows the caster an 80% chance to determine the truth about something, by placing in his mind a series of figures and images that he may interpret. The spell works only for one question, and then dispels. Any question may be asked, but it is recommended that as the questions grow in complexity the answers become more allegorical and cryptic.

Feign Death: 3rd level cleric spell.

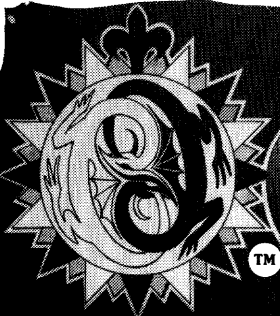
Metal and Mineral Detection: This spell acts as the *Wand* of the same name, allowing the caster a better chance of locating metals and minerals than his rhab-

domantic skill does. Thus, any metal or mineral may be detected without fail within the duration of the spell (1 round per level).

Speak with Animals: 2nd level cleric spell.

Speak with Dead: 3rd level cleric spell.

Sympathetic Magic I: This spell allows the caster to make a divination about a specific person or thing, provided that some portion of that person or thing is available to the caster. This item, which should be something like a lock of hair or a set of fingernail parings, is a material component of the spell, and disappears when the spell is cast. The spell allows the caster to know the location and condition (dead or alive, good or evil, etc.) of that person or thing, although these are only roughly perceived. The spell has a duration of 1 round per level.



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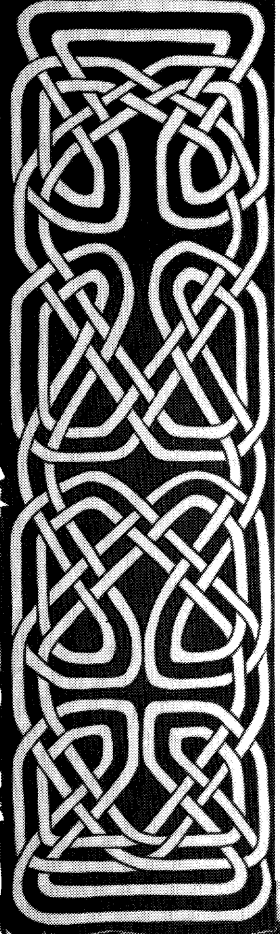
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Tongues: 4th level cleric spell.

Fourth level

Commune with Nature: 5th level druid spell.

Divination: 4th level cleric spell.

Divine Past: This spell lets the caster divine with reasonable accuracy an event that happened in the past. This event may be specified by the caster, but the chance of seeing a random event instead is 100% minus 5% per level. The spell will fill in the details of a single event, and identify the characters in it, as well as the sequence of events. If the event is chosen by the caster, the relative age of it should be considered; casters of 7th and 8th level may see only events happening within the past week; casters of 9th to 11th level can see events a month old; and casters of higher level can see any event less than a year old. After the oracle sees sufficient impressions (in the form of figures and depictions) to let him interpret the event, the spell dissipates.

Omen II: This spell is similar to Omen I, except that the extra chance of success is 20%.

Speak with Plants: 4th level cleric spell.

Stone Tell: 6th level cleric spell.

Vision: 7th level illusionist spell.

Wizard Eye: 4th level magic-user spell.

Fifth level

Commune: 5th level cleric spell of the caster's name.

Cure Critical Wounds: 5th level cleric spell.

Divine Present: This spell is essentially the same as the Divine Past spell, except that the events divined are occurring as the spell is cast, or occurred in the past 1-4 turns. One event may be divined, in the same manner as with the Divine Past spell, and the chance of seeing the desired event is the same.

Legend Lore: 6th level magic-user spell.

Hide: This spell is essentially the same in effect as the *Amulet of Proof Against Detection and Location*. For the duration of the spell, which is 2 turns per level, the caster may not be detected or located by any magical means, including the Seek and Sympathetic Magic spells. As well, he will not appear in divinations made about the time during which the spell is in effect, whether made in his past, present, or future.

Speak with Monsters: 6th level cleric spell.

Sympathetic Magic II: Similar to Sympathetic Magic I, this spell allows the caster to make divinations about a person or thing with only an item closely associated to that person or place, such as a familiar or a bulb grown there, as a material component. This component disappears when the spell is cast. This spell allows more precise divinations about locations and states, as well, and the duration is increased to 3 rounds per level. Also, the spell allows the caster to exercise a certain amount of control over the object of the spell, in a manner similar to a *Charm* spell, although this control will be lost if the caster tries to force the subject to endanger itself. Note that this spell can only be used in the present, and cannot change the past or shape the future.

True Seeing: 5th level cleric spell.

Sixth level

Contact Other Plane: 5th level magic-user spell.

Divine Future: This spell is similar to the other "Divine" spells, except that it allows the caster to divine an event that will happen in the near future (1 turn to 1 day). The mind of the caster is filled with figures and depictions, from which he may interpret the event. He may choose the event, but the chance of seeing it is the same as for the other "Divine" spells. Once a divination has been made, the spell dissipates.

Heal: 6th level cleric spell.

Memory: This spell allows the caster to absorb the memory of a person or thing (cf. Legend Lore) by speaking the spell and then touching the thing. If the thing touched is living, the touch causes its memory to be wiped blank; instincts, however, are not absorbed. There is a 20% chance that the spell will work in reverse, transferring to the person or thing the memory of the character, thus



wiping out the caster's memory. In this case the caster must make a system shock roll or become insane; the person (but not thing, obviously) receiving the memory must also do so. Once the memory has been absorbed, the character must decide what sorts of things he wishes to remember, since 80% of the memory will vanish after 6 turns.

Omen III: This spell is similar to the other two Omen spells, except that the extra chance of success that it gives is 30%.

Raise Dead: 5th level cleric spell.

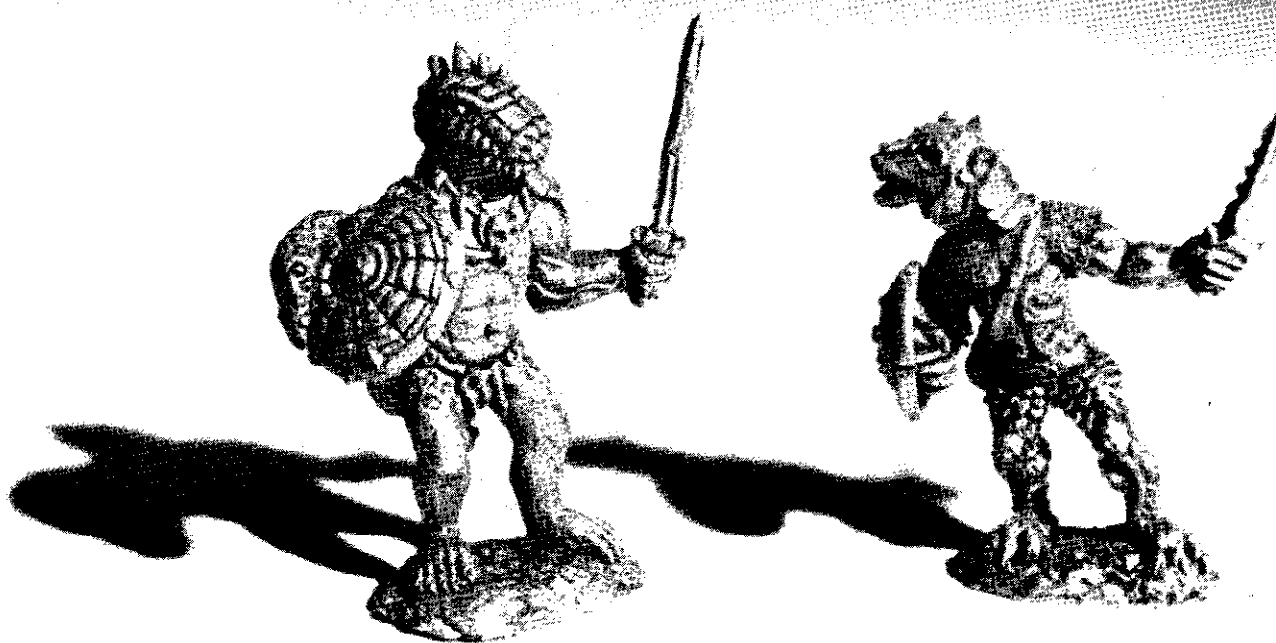
Reincarnate: 7th level druid spell.

Seek: This spell is borrowed from the Witch non-player character class, as presented in issue #43 of DRAGON magazine. The spell description reads, "By casting this spell, a Witch immediately gains the ability to determine the location of any single item, place, or creature and visualize all major aspects of its immediate surroundings (within 5"). She will be able to tell generally in what part of a world or area the thing being sought exists, and the closer she actually is to the thing being sought, the more definite her general idea will be. The spell may be used by a Witch for her own benefit, or she may be induced to cast it on behalf of another character or creature, as long as that individual is of the same specific alignment as the Witch..." An oracle need not be that particular about alignment, but will demand to be well paid. Since no duration was given for this spell, I recommend that it last 5 rounds per level.


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Stalin's Tanks blazes a new path

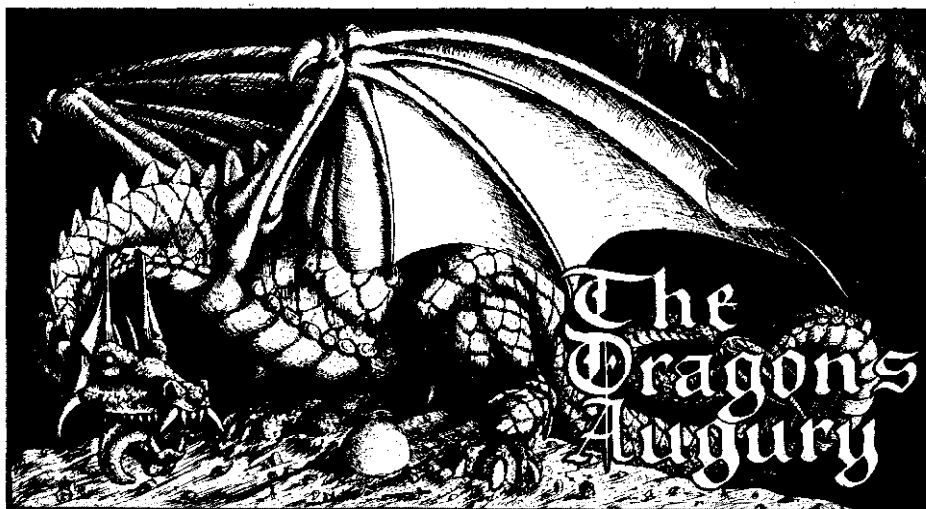
by Tony Watson

World War II armored combat is a subject that has undergone numerous treatments in gaming. That war remains the most popular historical period with gamers, and the tank warfare aspect is especially durable. Witness the success of *Panzerblitz* and the very many games on similar topics that have followed it. SPI and Avalon Hill have both developed tactical game systems to treat armored combat and have published families of tank games to deal with different fronts.

Thus, *STALIN'S TANKS*, a Metagaming MicroHistory game, might seem to be traveling a path already heavily trod. One might ask if another game on this topic is really needed. Happily, *Stalin's Tanks* instead seems to have carved out a niche for itself in a crowded field.

The game is played at an extreme tactical level. Each counter represents one tank or self-propelled gun, a single anti-tank gun or a squad of infantry. Map scale is fifty meters to the hex. At this level, players can really compare the strengths and weaknesses of the armored fighting vehicles involved, as well as experiment with tactics.

As one might guess from the title, this



game deals with action on the Eastern front. German vehicles include Pz IIs, two types of the Pz III, three variations of the ubiquitous Pz IV, the famous Panther and Tiger tanks, and a variety of self-propelled guns such as Sturmgeschutz, Elefants, Nashorns and the fearsome Panzerjager V and VI.

Soviet tanks include the light BT-7, three versions of the famous T-34 as well as the same vehicle equipped with an 85mm gun, three types of the KV series,

and the Joseph Stalin II, one of the late-war heavies. Five of the "SU" self-propelled guns series are presented as well two SP guns mounted on Stalin chassis. Each side also has two types of anti-tank guns and the aforementioned infantry squads. All in all, the countermix is nicely varied, portraying most of the prevalent and important AFVs that took part in the campaign.

Armored counters have either tank or SP symbols and the small surface of each

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contains a surprising amount of information: vehicle type, anti-personnel and anti-tank factors, armor class and movement value. Non-armored units are similarly treated, except that a numerical defense value is substituted for the alphabetic armor class.

The game-turn sequence is fluid and lively. The phasing player moves units which he chooses to move and then fires with any that did not move. The defender then fires his units, followed by the fire of the phasing units that moved. The phasing player then may move his units again, regardless of prior activity, up to half their movement value. As one can see, there is a lot of firing; unlike many tactical armor games, every unit can fire in its turn whether or not it moved, and both players can fire their units twice a turn—once in their own player-turn and once in the opposition's.

Movement is very basic, with units moving up to their allowance and paying costs for terrain. Facing is important, both for movement and armor considerations. Tanks or SP guns receiving fire from their flanks have their effective armor class reduced.

Armored combat is resolved simply, but in a manner that still retains the correct feel. The range to the target is calculated; this becomes the basic number

that must be thrown (or surpassed) on the die roll to hit the target. Die-roll modifiers are applied for prior movement and the cover of hills and woods. Favorable modifiers can be obtained by certain German vehicles to reflect their improved accuracy. If a hit is obtained, a chart is consulted. The anti-tank factor is cross-indexed with the armor code and the resulting number or lower must be thrown to destroy the target. Targets cannot simply be damaged; they are either eliminated or left unscathed (one of the game's drawbacks), so firefights tend to be quick and bloody.

Anti-personnel combat is conducted in a similar manner, except that an odds-ratio CRT is consulted to determine the number needed to kill the target. Infantry can engage in close assault, if it can get close enough, but this is really a tank game, and the infantry tends to run around doing little until an armored unit without a legitimate armored target decides to zap it and put it out of its misery.

The game has some optional rules that should really be mandatory for armor buffs. The range attenuation rule addresses the fact that armor-piercing shot loses its punch over distance. For every two hexes of range, the AT factor is reduced by one. This not only makes sense, it also allows the vehicles with

superior attack factors to exploit their advantage. An overrun rule appears here too, adding insult to injury for the hapless foot soldiers.

Stalin's Tanks emphasizes game over simulation, and in that respect is not recommended for realism buffs. But at the same time, it manages to cover the salient features of armored warfare: mobility, firepower versus armor strength, flanking and accuracy. Simplicity and ease of play are never sacrificed, so the game aspect never suffers.

There are a couple of problems with the game. While the components are functional, they are drab and lifeless. Typos in the scenarios are annoying, needless and surprisingly prevalent. The German counters for the IIIj, IIlg and IVd tanks have a numerical defense factor rather than the required letter armor class! Mistakes like these should not appear in a finished product.

Despite its frustrating flaws, *Stalin's Tanks* is a sound game that does justice to its subject matter and is easy to play. Not a bad accomplishment.

STALIN'S TANKS was designed by Roger Damon and is available for \$3.95 at many hobby shops or direct from Meta-gaming, Box 15346, Austin TX 78761.

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Aftermath! provides a solid basic play mechanic that has been over 2 years in playtesting. Rules are provided for modern firearms, NBC weapons and protections, mutations, survival, high technology and more. The game is structured to allow the referee to decide the nature of the holocaust that destroyed the world in which play will occur. *Aftermath!* is a step forward in the art of role-playing games.

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Warlock

The Game of Dueling Wizards

by Bill Fawcett

WARLOCK is one of four games being distributed in the United States by Games Workshop of England. It is basically a card game based on fantasy, in the same way that chess is a board game based on war. Included in the box are more than 200 cards, rules, six record sheets, a small gameboard (that is only incidentally used), and plastic markers. The technical quality of the board and cards is very good and the charts are easy to read. The artwork on the cards is very well done and interesting to examine on its own merits.

The rules are clearly written, and some spelled-out examples help to clarify the

few gray areas. This is not a very complex game, on the same level of complexity as gin rummy or pinochle, though it resembles neither. The premise is that each player starts with a number of manna-type points which are used to cast spells in combat or to draw new spells from the deck. Energy Points are gained back by defeating other wizards in combat and so banishing them to "limbo" for the rest of that hand.

The game is fun to play after the first few attempts and has some allowance for strategy. Still, it is basically a "beer and pretzels" game where luck can make all the difference. Unfortunately, it is a little too complicated to appeal to non-gamers and may be seen by gamers as too expensively priced (\$25) for what is essentially a well illustrated card game.

A House Divided

by Bill Fawcett

A HOUSE DIVIDED is a recent release from Game Designers' Workshop on an unusual topic for that company: a strategic-level game encompassing the entire American Civil War.

There are several uncommon gaming concepts built into the House Divided system that add interest to the play. The

most obvious of these is the movement system. There are NO HEXES! Movement is rather done on a net of rail, road, and river lines. Not all of a player's units, or any absolute number, may be able to be moved at one time. A player rolls for the number of "marches" he has available on his portion of the turn. These marches may be used to move counters (or stacks of counters), or may be used to fortify a city, destroy rail lines, or even forage for supplies. Further provisions are made to differentiate between movement of cavalry and infantry (the only two types of units in the game), and for Union naval movement that allows that side to strike unprotected Confederate coastal cities.

Both sides begin the war with nothing but militia forces. These are improved to "veteran" status, and then can become "crack" troops. Recruiting can be done on every turn, with all new units entering as militia-level troops. There is a maximum army size for both sides, determined by the number of recruiting centers currently in their control.

The combat system is a distant cousin of the *Imperium* system with units lining up to face each other and a die roll determining whether or not they do any damage. This system moves quickly, and reality is enhanced by the addition of modifiers for such factors as entrenchments and river crossings.

The Union's victory conditions are much more difficult than the Confederacy's, but the Union has considerably more resources and several special advantages, such as the naval power mentioned earlier. In the basic game, the South wins if it can capture Washington. This can mean victory to the South when it is losing on all other fronts, and the rule encourages a last-minute lunge at the Union capital. A better victory condition is given in the optional rules (included on a separate sheet). Here the loss of Washington is a severe blow to the Union, but won't end the game unless the South is also doing well on other fronts.

The map is very nicely done and extremely easy to follow. It is printed on a thick paper stock and could use stronger mounting. The counters — blue and grey, naturally — are backprinted to allow for step reduction. The symbols for cavalry and infantry are both crossed weapons (sabres and muskets), which can be hard to tell apart in a large stack.

A House Divided is fast moving, especially for a strategic-level simulation. All the necessary elements are accounted for in only four pages of rules, and even a game lasting the 40-turn maximum takes less than a full evening of gaming. Though there is less "color" than in a tactical game, *A House Divided* does an excellent job of recreating the problems and decisions that the top commanders of both sides constantly faced.

There's more!

Proud as we are of this issue of **DRAGON™** magazine, we're pretty pleased with what we've done in the past. And apparently, so are our readers, because most of our back issues are sold out. We do have copies of some magazines for sale, including issue #22 and issues #40 through #52.

If you've searched in vain for a copy of one of our early issues, the **BEST OF THE DRAGON™** may solve the problem. This anthology of reprints of our most requested material from issues #1 through #14, is one of several other products sold by Dragon Publishing: **THE FINIEOUS TREASURY™**, a collection of adventures featuring the hero of our most popular comic strip; and **DRAGONTALES™**, an anthology of original heroic fantasy fiction and art.

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(Continued from page 5)

we also estimate that about 3,000,000 people play D&D or AD&D games. So, only about 7% of all players have even heard of the DRAGON version of the anti-paladin or the witch or the samurai. If you insist on using those classes for player characters, you'll be limiting the scope of your playing experience to only a fraction of that 7%. And then who's being high-handed? — JJ

'A few chuckles'

Dear Editor:

I'll begin this letter by saying that, although I don't particularly care for TSR Hobbies, Inc., I like the AD&D game system very much; despite its flaws, it is a very playable game that manages to achieve a better balance of rich detail and ease of play than any other role-

playing game. Also, I enjoy DRAGON magazine, which is an invaluable source of ideas; no DM should be without it. Thus, even though I don't like the company, I've spent a lot of money on its products (why does the game have to be so addictive?).

Concerning Terrance Mikrut's letter in #49: I heartily disagree with his opinions. It is my belief that DRAGON's ever-growing roster of NPCs provides even more diversity than is already present in the system and can spice up any adventure or campaign. Keep up the good work; the more, the merrier.

Speaking of interesting changes of pace, DRAGON #48½ gave me a few chuckles. Gaming is, after all, a pastime to provide enjoyment, and most games (and gaming magazines) can benefit from the injection of a bit of humor into the proceedings. In this spirit, I have placed Bugs Bunny in my campaign, not as a monster to be fought but as comic relief and a source of information for the characters — assuming they ask the proper questions

and are well equipped with carrots!

The cover of issue #49 does indeed suggest a dynamic scenario. I can't wait until the characters in my world get around to building castles so I can spring this one on them. Congratulations to Tim Hildebrandt for an outstanding piece of artwork, and to DRAGON for commissioning it (ditto Phil Foglio and the cover of #48).

Michael A. Lavoie
Nashua, N. H.

After saying all those nice things about us, Michael, I wish you would have explained why you don't like TSR. At any rate, your letter was selected for publication not because you said nice things about us, but because of the point you made about DRAGON #48½ (the April Fool section inside #48).

Games are amusement, first and foremost, and not only is humor beneficial in adventure and role-playing games, it is necessary. We must be careful to never take ourselves too seriously — such is the ammunition used by those who view adventure gaming as demon worship, closet violence, or worse, based on misinterpretations and ignorance. Besides, after a rough day at the office, hacking and slaying monsters and sacking up gold pieces, I always find it relaxing to hear, "Down the corridor you see a large yellowish object. Upon closer examination, you find it has a smooth surface. It gives slightly when you touch it, and you hear a high-pitched squeak . . . yep, it's a giant rubber ducky! — JJ

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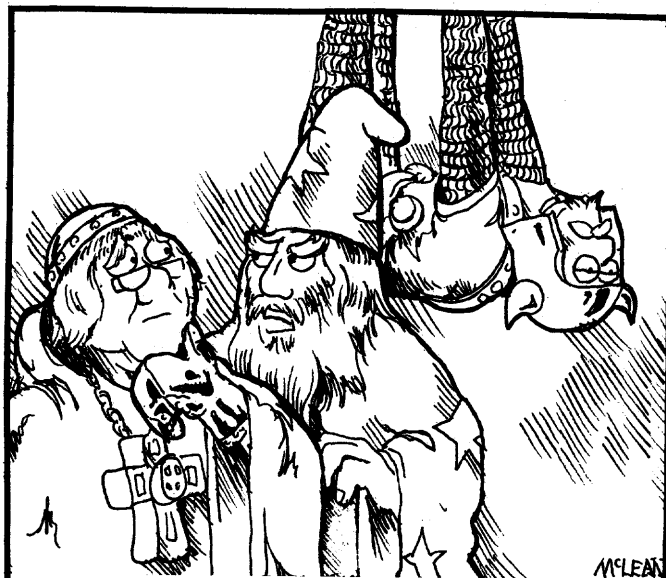
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The Martian Chronicle

Boppers, Ogres and Metoids

HOTEL OPENING DRAWS
RECORD CROWDS

Officials estimate crowds of Martians in excess of 5000 were present to witness the grand opening of the new hotel complex at the Martian starport. This beautiful new building contains restaurants, lounges, casinos, theatres, and hotels of similar design can be found on A or B class starports throughout travelled space. Architectural renderings of this popular design are available from FASA (in 15mm of course). Earth shipments to be arriving soon. ed.

MURDER! SCANDELI

Phoenix Enterprises Limited's luxury liner the King Richard is once again the focal point of our news tonight. Ever since first reports more than two weeks ago of something having gone awry aboard the King Richard, this reporter has made it his business to discover what actually occurred. When-did? After penetrating PELL's elaborate cover-up, I have discovered cold-blooded murder! But the questions still remain: Who-dun-it? Who died? Why? (Reprinted with permission from the Imperial Enquirer)

Many more questions and a few answers can be found in ACTION ABOARD: ADVENTURES ON THE KING RICHARD a book of scenarios, ideas, and personalities to create endless ACTION ABOARD, published by FASA.

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LEADSMITH LEEPER SAYS:

FEED YOUR DRAGONS

Dragon

TRAVELLER REPORT ATTACK ON SHIPYARDS

Last week the shipyards of Mars were attacked by the Zhodani Consulate. The raid was designed to destroy the production capabilities of the Imperial Military Equipment Division of MARS. METALS. Although damage was extensive in some areas, the production facilities developing grav. tanks and air rats were unharmed thus keeping these vehicles on schedule. The shipyard facility for spacecraft was the hardest hit area and has been set back about four weeks. The schedule for release of the 15mm scale TRAVELLER ground vehicles is now 15 September, 1981 (Solar Date), the GUNBOATS) scheduled release is on October 1981 (Solar Date). More specifics in the next report.

MORE ALIEN RACES

MARTIAN METALS has added more alien races to their ever expanding line of TRAVELLER miniatures. Available now are #2014 Asian, #2015 Beast of Burden, #2016 Droyne, #2017 K'Kree (Military) coming in September Zhodani, Military and Nobles and more K'Kree.

Ever been stuck on a planet like this, with nothing to do? What you need is HIGH PASSAGE, your ticket to Traveller adventure. Included in every issue of this quarterly magazine/play aid is a complete adventure. Sounds good already, but we also include Starship Files, with deck plans and descriptions of ships. How much would a magazine like this be worth to you? NO! Don't answer! Because you also receive: In Transit, details and drawings of small craft. The Armoury, details and drawings of Traveller weapons. This alone would be worth more than the cover price. But wait! Every issue also includes a complete subplot, feature, such as issue two's interview with Marc Miller.

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NEWS FLASH
Please be aware that the Venusian plot has once more taken a frightful turn. It seems the Venusians have released a line of figures to compete with Martian Metals and the Earth based SIAN VEGGIES (They're Only Organic!) and your local Martians. Remember to be warned. These figures are rotten or soon will be. The correct figures are only metal, Martian Metal. Check carefully for fakes.

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RIVETS (Robotic Warfare in Microtute)

The following is an excerpt from Metagaming's Microgame 5 "RIVETS".

However, the biological warfare of the late 21st century, during the Pan-European-Combining World and, free will or not, the BOPPERS were on their own.

Surprisingly, they did quite well. Due to their low technological needs they could live off the land, especially if the land had a few used cars scavenging; they always got the best bargains at garage sales. Also, the central brains were equipped with heuristic epistemological programming, which allowed the BOPPERS to learn through experience. Experience was important, since their average IQ was only slightly higher than that of most kitchen appliances. Despite their limited intellect, the BOPPERS developed a cybernetic equivalent of territoriality. This led to conflicts between neighboring factories, escalating to full wars.

These wars established the BOPPERS as the rulers of the battlefields in the 22nd century. Actually, they ruled the battlefield simply because they were the only things stupid enough to be on BOPPERS? Oh, yeah. Battlefield Oriented Pre-Programmed Eradicator Robots.

Now MARTIAN METALS brings you in livid detail, all the crazy machines from the world of "RIVETS". There is even a free set of rules on how to play the game with the Microtutes. The following is a list of "RIVETS" Microtutes available in:

- #0001 ROCKET BOPPERS
- #0002 JACK BOPPERS
- #0003 DIVE BOPPERS
- #0004 TINY BOPPERS
- #0005 BIG BOPPERS
- #0006 LIGHT BOPPERS
- #0007 More scenarios and BOPPERS in the future. Ask for the Microtutes and rules at your local game shop or contact the men from Mars (address below).

METOID GET LOOSE

(Martian Wire Service) A group of Martian metoids (DRAGONSLAYERS 25's back #1619 Giant Scorpions) have been released from Mars. According to Leadsmithe Leeper, they were originally sent to Earth to train for guard and attack duty. However, their ravenous appetite for Venusians prompted the decision at Martian Head Quarters to release the figures.

"Metoids are the only lead figures capable of eating Venusians," Leeper said, "and are dangerous especially when provoked. Though they do eat anything, their favorite diet is Venusians and Mordorian shovel heads. Their highly developed senses are able to detect prey at five meters. The public is urged", continued Leeper, "to get pack #1619 (containing a single large metoid as a first line of defence against disguised Venusians."

Although the BOPPERS were built at automated factories, they were not true robots. They could not act in a completely independent manner (although they were known to behave irrationally at times) and would usually just follow the dictates of their programming. Also, the BOPPERS were partially controlled by a central brain unit, usually located at the factory or at the headquarters of the local dictator. Despite their programming and the control of a certain amount of free will - as much as the average brain unit, the BOPPERS did have a certain amount of automation.

OGRE, OGRE WHO'S GOT THE OGRES??

MARTIAN METALS has just received clearance from the Combine Military Procurement Office to release, once again, the OGRE the Martian Republic Press Service that the war between the Combine and the Proxima Federation of Worlds has come to a standstill. Negotiations for a peace settlement are well underway. In the meantime, the public (that means YOU) will be allowed to buy the award winning and battle-tested 1/300 scale vehicles. There are even some new vehicles, such as the Mobile Howitzer #8105 and the Static Howitzer #8106. The original vehicles are all available.

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 - #8103 HEAVY TANK (3) \$3.25
 - #8104 MISSILE TANK (3) \$3.25
 - #8105 MOBILE HOWITZER (3) \$3.25
 - #8106 STATIC HOWITZER (2) \$3.25
- Order them now. These vehicles will be available as long as the peace pact remains in effect.